SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE

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Gregory of Nyssa: *Contra Eunomium* III.

An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies

Proceedings of the 12th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Leuven, 14-17 September 2010)

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Edited by
JOHAN LEEMANS & MATTHIEU CASSIN

BRILL

Gregory of Nyssa: *Contra Eunomium* III

Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

Editors

J. den Boeft – B.D. Ehrman – J. van Oort
D.T. Runia – C. Scholten

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Preface

The contributions gathered in this volume were originally delivered as papers during the Twelfth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa, which was held September 14th–17th, 2010 at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). Trinitarian theology and *Contra Eunomium* III were the main theme of the colloquium, which met amidst a delightful spell of autumn sun in the renovated premises of the Irish College, hitherto known as the Institute for Ireland in Europe. One introductory lecture and twelve main lectures explored the conference's theme. The majority of the twenty-six offered papers dealt with one aspect or passage of *CE* III; following the custom of the Gregory of Nyssa Colloquia, there was also room for papers dealing with other texts or topics related to Gregory of Nyssa's writings or thought and their *Nachleben*. This book consists of four parts, mirroring by and large the structure of the Colloquium: a general introduction (by M. Cassin); the English translation of *CE* III (by S. G. Hall); the main contributions, each exploring one section of *CE* III; a final section with further supporting studies and articles on other aspects of research on Gregory of Nyssa.

The Leuven Colloquium continued a venerable tradition, going back to 1969, when the first colloquium met in Chevetogne under the presidency of Marguerite Harl. Since then gatherings have been held at regular intervals in places and countries as diverse as Münster (1972), Leiden (1974), Cambridge (1978), Mainz (1982), Pamplona (1986), St. Andrews (1990), Paderborn (1998), Athens (2000), Olomouc (2004), Tübingen (2008). With its focus on *Contra Eunomium* III, the Leuven colloquium continues the work started at the colloquia of Pamplona (*CE* I) and Olomouc (*CE* II). The discussion on the authorship of "Basil's" *Letter* 38, which took place at the Tübingen colloquium, was continued in Leuven with a new contribution by G. Maspero, M. Degli Esposti, D. Benedetto (included in this volume), who, during a special thematic session, entered into dialogue with J. Zachhuber and V. Drecoll. During the conference banquet a small ceremony was held in honour of Professor Stuart Hall. In this way, we wanted to express our recognition of and gratitude for his many outstanding contributions to patristic scholarship in general and to Gregory of Nyssa's scholarship in particular. Besides his ever-generous presence and wise counsel, most notably his impressive translations of Gregory's writings on behalf of our colloquia (Easter sermons, *Homilies on Ecclesiastes*, *Homilies on the Beatitudes*, *Contra Eunomium* I–III) were put on record.

The organization of the Colloquium was made possible by grants from the K.U. Leuven Research Fund, the Fund for Scientific Research—Flanders and the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. The practical organization was coordinated by Ms. Carla Nicolaye, supported by Mr. Fabian Sieber and Dr. L. Van der Sypt.

After being presented at the conference, all the papers submitted for inclusion here went through a thorough process of peer review, and it is an (at times heavily) revised

version of the original paper that is included in this volume. We owe thanks to everybody who assisted in this endeavor; we thank the authors for having taken into account the reviewers' suggestions, and we thank those senior colleagues who have been willing to act as peer reviewers: M. R. Barnes, V. H. Drecoll, S. G. Hall, L. Karfíková, M. Ludlow, G. Maspero, E. Mühlenberg, A. Radde-Gallwitz, J. Zachhuber. For assistance in the editing of this volume we owe thanks to Ms. Carla Nicolaye and Dr. L. Van der Sypt. We also thank Prof. Dr. J. den Boeft for his readiness to include this volume in the *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* as well as Ms. L. Schouten and Mrs. M. Kuiper of Brill Publishers for the smooth cooperation in the process of publishing this book.

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PART ONE

General Introduction

∴

Contre Eunome III : une introduction

Matthieu Cassin

Deux colloques Grégoire de Nysse ont déjà été consacrés aux deux premiers livres du *Contre Eunome*, en 1986 et en 2004[1]. La série va se clore avec celui-ci – ou presque, puisqu'il reste encore à traiter la *Réfutation de la profession de foi*. Étant donné que le contexte théologique de cette controverse est bien connu et a déjà largement été commenté dans les actes des deux colloques précédents, je ne m'attarderai pas sur ces points et adopterai d'emblée une perspective plus serrée. L'objectif de cette présentation préliminaire, à la différence des commentaires suivis, est d'attirer l'attention sur un certain nombre de questions, générales ou transversales, qui me semblent importantes, et que l'on oublie facilement une fois plongé dans la lecture de cette œuvre si complexe.

I Contexte

Le premier point à envisager concerne les différents éléments qui constituent le contexte de réalisation de cette œuvre[2].

1 *Datation*

Le *Contre Eunome* III est l'un des rares textes de Grégoire que l'on puisse dater avec quelque précision. Voici les principaux jalons dont nous disposons à propos des textes de cette controverse. D'après son titre, le premier livre *Contre Eunome* a été rédigé après la mort de Basile, soit après septembre 378[3]. À l'autre bout de la chaîne, la *Réfutation de la Profession de foi* date nécessairement

1 L. F. Mateo-Seco – J. L. Bastero (éds.), *El « Contra Eunomium I » en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa : VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988 ; L. Karfíková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (éds.), *Gregory of Nyssa : Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Olomouc, September 15-18, 2004*), SVigChr 82, Leiden e.a. 2007.

2 Pour cette question, voir l'étude de B. Studer, « Der geschichtliche Hintergrund des ersten Buches Contra Eunomium Gregors von Nyssa », in : L. F. Mateo-Seco – J. L. Bastero (éds.), *El « Contra Eunomium I » en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa : VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 139-171.

3 La date traditionnelle est le 1^{cr} janvier 379 ; voir cependant le débat entre P. Maraval et J.-R. Pouchet (P. Maraval, « La date de la mort de Basile de Césarée », *REAug* 34 (1988) 25-38 ; J.-R. Pouchet, « La date de l'élection épiscopale de saint Basile et celle de sa mort », *RHE* 87

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d'après l'été 383, moment où le texte d'Eunome qu'il réfute a été présenté au « synode des partis »[4]. Or la *Réfutation* dépend manifestement de l'ensemble des traités contre Eunome, et montre une proximité particulière avec le livre III, dont elle reprend textuellement, en l'abrégeant légèrement, une section[5]. En outre, on peut également montrer que le discours *Sur la divinité du Fils et de l'Esprit et sur Abraham*, qui date de la fin mai 383, dépend entre autres de matériaux élaborés dans le livre III[6].

On dispose donc d'une fenêtre de quatre ans et demi, automne 378-été 383, pour répartir la rédaction des trois livres *Contre Eunome*. Le dernier élément à prendre en compte est le témoignage de Jérôme qui, dans le *De uiris illustribus*[7], mentionne qu'il entendit lire par l'auteur, en présence de Grégoire de Nazianze, « des livres contre Eunome », *contra Eunomium legit libros*. On considère généralement qu'une telle situation, où Grégoire de Nazianze et Jérôme étaient réunis avec Grégoire de Nysse, ne peut renvoyer qu'au concile de Constantinople de 381[8]. Jérôme, s'il utilise le pluriel, ne précise pas, cependant, combien de livres ont été lus : deux ? trois[9] ? Or il n'y a, à ma connaissance,

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(1992) 5-33 ; P. Maraval, « Retour sur quelques dates concernant Basile de Césarée et Grégoire de Nysse », *RHE* 99 (2004) 153-166), qui a conduit à établir la date que je retiens ici.

4 Sur ce synode, voir en particulier M. Wallraff, « Il 'Sinodo de tutte le eresie' a Costantinopoli (383) », in : *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana. XXV incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma, 8-11 maggio 1996*, Roma 1997, II, 271-279.

5 *CE* III 6,27-41 (GNO II 195,22-200,22) = *Ref.* 88-97 (GNO II 348,14-352,17)

6 Sur ce discours, voir en dernier lieu M. Cassin, « *De deitate Filii et Spiritus sancti et in Abraham* », in : V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa : The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism, Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Tübingen, 17-20 September 2008*), SVigChr 106, Leiden, Boston 2011, 277-311, et pour la datation, 282-284.

7 Chap. XXVIII : « Gregorius, Nyssenus episcopus, frater Basilii Caesariensis, ante paucos annos mihi et Gregorio Nazianzeno *Contra Eunomium* legit libros. » (E. C. Richardson (ed.), *Hieronymus, Liber de viris inlustribus ; Gennadius, Liber de viris inlustribus*, TU 14.1, Leipzig 1896).

8 Jérôme est présent à Constantinople en 380-381 ; pour cette datation, on se reportera aux ouvrages classiques : F. Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme, sa vie et son œuvre*, Louvain, Paris 1922, 59-72, qui mentionne cet épisode, p. 61 ; J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome. His Life, Writings, and Controversies*, London 1975, 66-79, qui mentionne cet épisode, p. 71 ; voir également l'article synthétique de H. Hagendahl – J. H. Waszink, « Hieronymus », *RAC* 15 (1991) 117-139, 122 ; pour les mises à jour bibliographiques, voir la notice en ligne du BBKL, http://bbkl.de/lexikon/artikel.php?art=./H/Hi/hieronymus_sophronius.art.

9 Pour des éléments pouvant appuyer l'hypothèse de deux livres, voir J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa, Contra Eunomium I, 1-146, eingeleitet, übersetzt und kommentiert*, Frankfurt e.a. 1993, 34 n. 98.

aucun élément qui permette de situer la production du troisième livre de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* d'Eunome, et donc la réponse que lui opposa Grégoire, contrairement aux affirmations avancées par certains auteurs, et en particulier rien qui permette de dire que le troisième livre d'Eunome ait été suscité par les deux premiers livres de Grégoire[10]. Toutefois, dans la mesure où les trois livres du *Contre Eunome* ont visiblement été rédigés dans l'ordre où nous les connaissons, le troisième livre nysséen a difficilement pu être composé avant le début des années 380, et l'a sans doute été plus tard, si on veut laisser un peu de temps pour la composition des deux premiers livres et les activités de l'évêque de Nysse pendant cette période. On peut donc retenir comme dernière approximation 381 – début de l'été 383 pour situer la composition de l'œuvre. Le relatif inachèvement du troisième livre, sur lequel je reviendrai, et l'existence de deux autres livres de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* (IV et V), auxquels Grégoire n'a jamais répondu, pourraient en effet s'expliquer par l'intervention de la *Profession de foi* d'Eunome au cours de la rédaction de *Contre Eunome* III : l'été 383 constituerait donc bien le terme de la rédaction de ce livre. Si la controverse s'est poursuivie par la suite entre les deux hommes, c'est sous la forme de la *Réfutation de la Profession de foi*, et non plus d'une réfutation de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* qui constituait le *Contre Eunome*.

10 Voir R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius, The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 81, n. 19 (et déjà M. Albertz, *Untersuchungen über die Schriften des Eunomius*, Wittenberg 1908, 34-35), *contra* W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni Contra Eunomium libri*, GNO II, Leiden 1960, IX-X. On trouve un utile résumé des positions antérieures dans J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa*, 60-61 (qui semble cependant ignorer le désaccord de R. P. Vaggione). La thèse de W. Jaeger, reprise par E. Cavalcanti, *Studi Eunomiani*, Roma 1976, 69, qui repose principalement sur un argument faible de vraisemblance psychologique – la réponse de Grégoire aurait suscité une poursuite de la réfutation du livre de Basile par Eunome – me semble peu probante. La tentative de J.-A. Röder (p. 61) pour la renforcer par un appui sur *CE* III 1,1 ne paraît pas non plus concluante : il n'y a aucun élément dans le prologue qui aille dans ce sens ; le membre de phrase cité par Röder (*CE* III 1,1 [3, 6-13]) indique simplement que Grégoire compare son troisième livre à une troisième mise à terre, dans la mesure où il considère l'avoir déjà emporté deux fois contre Eunome, dans les deux premiers livres. La chronologie proposée par J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa*, 72, induit donc en erreur : il n'y a aucun moyen de situer la parution des livres III, IV et V de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* par rapport à la publication des livres I, II et III du *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire. Sur l'ensemble de cette chronologie, voir aussi S. Destephen, *Prosopographie du diocèse d'Asie* (*325-641*), Paris 2008, 315-316 (art. « Eunomios 1 »).

2 *Œuvres nysséennes contemporaines*

Une fois ces dates précisées, comment situer le troisième livre contre Eunome dans la production d'ensemble de Grégoire ? On sait combien il est difficile de dater la plupart des œuvres de l'auteur et combien les dates proposées depuis le début des recherches sur l'évêque de Nysse doivent être prises avec précaution, sauf dans quelques cas particuliers dont font partie les différentes pièces de la controverse avec Eunome. On peut cependant proposer quelques hypothèses, dont on précisera le plus ou moins grand degré de certitude[11].

Certains traités doivent très vraisemblablement être situés avant *Contre Eunome* III (outre *Contre Eunome* I-II) : le *De virginitate*, que l'on s'accorde à placer dans la décennie 370-380[12], les *Homélies sur les Béatitudes*[13], mais aussi

11 Outre les études ponctuelles, plusieurs tentatives ont été faites pour rassembler de manière synthétique cette chronologie : S. Lenain De Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles justifiez par les citations des auteurs originaux, avec une chronologie où l'on fait un abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile ; et avec des notes pour éclaircir les difficultez des faits et de la chronologie. Tome neuvième, qui contient les vies de saint Basile, de saint Grégoire de Nazianze, de saint Grégoire de Nysse et de saint Amphiloque*, Paris 1703, 561-616 *passim* et tableau, 743-744 ; J. Daniélou, « La chronologie des sermons de Grégoire de Nysse », *RevSR* 29 (1955) 346-372 ; id., « La chronologie des œuvres de Grégoire de Nysse », *StPatr* 7 (1966) 159-169 ; G. May, « Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa », in : M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22-26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 51-67, et en dernier lieu P. Maraval, « Cronologia delle opere », in : L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *Gregorio di Nissa, Dizionario*, Rome 2007, 181-190, et la version anglaise du même texte, « Chronology of Works », in : G. Maspero – L. F. Mateo-Seco (éds.), *The Brill Dictionnary of Gregory of Nyssa,* SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 153-169. Si aucune référence n'est donnée pour la datation des œuvres évoquées par la suite, c'est que je me réfère aux datations proposées par P. Maraval dans l'article cité.

12 J. Gribomont, « Le panégyrique de la virginité, œuvre de jeunesse de Grégoire de Nysse », *RAM* 43 (1967) 249-266, en particulier 250, qui nuance la position assez tranchée de M. Aubineau dans son édition (SC 119, 31), qui semble retenir la date de 371.

13 Il ne paraît pas y avoir d'éléments autres que négatifs pour dater ces homélies ; voir par exemple A. Meredith, « Gregory of Nyssa, De beatitudinibus, oratio I : "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5, 3) », in : H. R. Drobner – A. Viciano (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa : Homilies on the Beatitudes. An English Version with Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the Eighth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Paderborn, 14-18 September 1998)*, SVigChr 52, Leiden, Boston, Köln 2000, 93-109, ici 94-95 et A. A. Mosshammer, « Gregory's Intellectual Development : A Comparison of the Homilies on the Beatitudes with the Homilies on the Song of Songs », *ibid.*, 359-387, 359, n. 1.

les *Homélies sur l'Ecclésiaste* (379-380?)[14]. D'autres textes sont à placer peu avant les traités *Contre Eunome*, dans leur proximité immédiate : le *De mortuis*, les deux œuvres sur le commencement de la Genèse dédiées à son frère Pierre (*In Hexaemeron* et *De hominis opificio*), et peut-être l'*Oratio catechetica*, si l'on retient l'hypothèse de datation avancée par R. Winling[15].

La période qui précède immédiatement la rédaction du troisième livre *Contre Eunome* ou qui en est contemporaine est féconde ; on y place par exemple les *Homélies sur l'Oraison dominicale*[16], mais on y situe surtout plusieurs textes qui montrent un rapport direct avec les controverses liées au concile de 381, entre autres au sujet de la divinité de l'Esprit : *Ad Graecos*, *Ad Simplicium*, *Adversus Macedonianos*[17].

Quelques œuvres semblent plus ou moins contemporaines du *Contre Eunome* III : la *Vita Macrinae*, le petit traité *In illud : Tunc et ipse*, sans doute le *Contra Fatum*[18], peut-être le *De Pythonissa* et le *De anima et resurrectione*[19].

D'autres traités sont plus difficiles à dater : par exemple, le *De perfectione* est placé par G. May pendant la période 370-378, tandis que d'autres auteurs tendent plutôt à le rapprocher d'œuvres plus tardives[20] ; de même,

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14 Voir les arguments de F. Vinel, *Grégoire de Nysse, Homélies sur l'Ecclésiaste. Introduction, traduction et notes*, SC 416, Paris 1996, 16-20, et les éléments rectificatifs apportés par P. Maraval, « Chronology of Works », 158, à partir de la datation de la mort de Basile.

15 R. Winling, Grégoire de Nysse, *Discours catéchétique. Introduction, traduction et notes*, SC 453, Paris 2000, 125-130, datation qui semble acceptée par P. Maraval.

16 La date en est discutée ; aux éléments rassemblés par P. Maraval, ajouter M. Alexandre, « La variante de Lc 11, 2 dans la troisième Homélie sur l'Oraison dominicale de Grégoire de Nysse et la controverse avec les Pneumatomaques », in : M. Cassin – H. Grelier (eds.), *Grégoire de Nysse : la Bible dans la construction de son discours. Actes du colloque de Paris, 9-10 février 2007*, Paris 2008, 163-189, en particulier 181.

17 L'*Ad Ablabium*, en revanche, devrait être placé vers la fin de la vie de Grégoire, selon G. Maspero, *La Trinità e l'uomo. L'Ad Ablabium di Gregorio di Nissa*, Rome 2004, 30-42, en particulier 41-42 (position conservée dans G. Maspero, *Trinity and Man, Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Ablabium*, Leiden 2007).

18 M. Bandini, *Gregorio di Nissa, « Contro il fato ». Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento*, Bologna 2003, 32-34, suivi par B. Motta, *Il « Contra fatum » di Gregorio di Nissa nel dibattito tardo-antico sul fatalismo e sul determinismo*, Pisa/Roma 2008, 13-14.

19 Voir par exemple les propositions d'A. M. Silvas, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God*, Turnhout 2008, 154-155 ; les précisions (hiver 383-384 ou 384-385) avancées par l'auteur n'ont, à ma connaissance, aucun fondement dans les sources.

20 Voir par exemple M. Harl, « "From Glory to Glory". L'interprétation de 2 Cor. 3, 18b par Grégoire de Nysse et la liturgie baptismale », in : Marguerite Harl, *Le Déchiffrement du sens. Études sur l'herméneutique chrétienne d'Origène à Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1993, 307-312, ici 307-308 ; l'étude par A. Le Boulluec, « Enjeux trinitaires chez les Pères

l'*In inscriptiones Psalmorum* est généralement situé pendant la décennie 370-380, tandis que J. Reynard préfère le situer au début ou au milieu des années 380, soit pendant la période de plus grande fécondité nysséenne[21]. L'*Epistula canonica ad Letoium*, enfin, ne peut être antérieure au concile de 381.

Il faut encore mentionner l'*Antirrheticus aduersus Apolinarium*, qui est sûrement postérieur au *Contre Eunome* III, mais lui est lié par plusieurs éléments de l'argumentation. Sa datation est discutée : l'hypothèse traditionnelle le place en 386-387, tandis qu'on a proposé plus récemment de le situer plus haut dans le temps, à proximité immédiate du *Contre Eunome* III[22].

La datation des discours est plus difficile encore ; retenons cependant quelques propositions : l'*In sanctum Theodorum* remonterait à 379-380[23] ; les quatre discours sociaux (*De beneficientia ; In illud : Quatenus . . . ; Contra usurarios ; Contra fornicarios*) que l'on situe généralement au début du règne de Théodose[24] ; deux discours doivent trouver place pendant le concile de 381, le

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cappadociens. L'exégèse de Rm 9, 5b », in : *L'Exégèse patristique de Romains 9-11. Grâce et liberté. Israël et nations. Le Mystère du Christ. Colloque du 3 février 2007. Centre Sèvres – Facultés jésuites de Paris,* Paris 2007, 67-81, ici 79-80, de l'explication de Rm 9, 5b conduirait à privilégier une datation postérieure à *Eun.* III, du fait de l'application de ce verset au Christ.

21 J. Reynard, *Grégoire de Nysse, Sur les titres des Psaumes, introduction, édition et traduction*, SC 466, Paris 2002, 13-15. Une telle date s'accorderait d'ailleurs à la fois avec la proposition de J. Leemans et avec les réserves de P. Maraval sur la date de *Mart.* Ia-b (voir *infra* n. 25).

22 Voir la présentation des positions antérieures dans H. Grelier, *L'argumentation de Grégoire de Nysse contre Apolinaire de Laodicée : Étude littéraire et doctrinale de l'Antirrheticus adversus Apolinarium et de l'Ad Theophilum adversus apolinaristas*, Thèse de doctorat, Université Lumière Lyon II, Lyon 2008, 69-76, et les conclusions de l'auteur, qui s'en tient à une position prudente, mais rapproche cependant l'*Antirrheticus* du *Contre Eunome* III et de la *Réfutation de la Profession de foi*, à la suite de J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa, Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, SVigChr 46, Leiden e.a. 2000, 205-206.

23 J. Leemans, « Job et les autres. L'usage des Écritures dans les panégyriques sur les martyrs par Grégoire de Nysse », in : M. Cassin – H. Grelier (éds.), *Grégoire de Nysse*, 227-244, 228 et n. 6.

24 Contrairement à ce que laisse penser l'article de P. Maraval, « Chronology of Works », 161, L. Dattrino, « Aspetti della predicazione quaresimale di Gregorio Nisseno », in : *Quaeritur inventus colitur. Miscellanea in onore di Padre Umberto Maria Fasola, B.,* Vaticano 1989, I, 185-198, n'apporte aucun élément nouveau pour la datation de ces discours ; sa formule « nei primi anni dell'impero di Teodosio I » (p. 198) n'est qu'une synthèse des datations proposées par J. Daniélou, auxquelles il se contente de renvoyer en note pour chacune des homélies. Cette situation chronologique des homélies est en effet probable, même si les prémisses qui y ont conduit sont peu satisfaisantes.

De deitate adversus Evagrium et l'*Oratio funebris in Meletium*. L'*In diem luminum* daterait du début de l'année 383 ; il faudrait également placer dans ces années l'homélie en deux parties sur les Quarante de Sébaste (*In quadraginta martyres* Ia-b)[25]. Je ne m'attarderai pas ici sur la datation d'autres discours, pour lesquels les indices manquent plus ou mois radicalement.

S'il est malaisé de dater les discours, la plupart des *Lettres* de Grégoire ne se prêtent pas plus facilement à la datation[26]. On rappellera simplement ici que quelques-unes d'entre elles sont directement liées au *Contre Eunome :* la *Lettre* 29, lettre d'envoi du *Contre Eunome* (I) à Pierre de Sébaste, et la réponse de ce dernier (*Ep.* 30) ; la *Lettre* 15, lettre d'envoi du *Contre Eunome* à deux élèves d'un sophiste célèbre, généralement identifié avec Libanios[27]. Bien des datations demeurent incertaines ; il faut cependant garder à l'esprit ces rapprochements pour lire le troisième livre *Contre Eunome*. Deux perspectives se complètent ici : comment l'étude de ce texte peut-elle confirmer ou infirmer ces hypothèses de datation? comment ces rapprochements peuvent-ils éclairer la lecture du *Contre Eunome*, et la compréhension de la pensée de Grégoire, en ses évolutions comme en ses variations?

3 *Contexte ecclésial*

Une autre dimension doit être prise en compte pour étudier ce traité ; en effet, le contexte ecclésial qui entoura la composition de l'œuvre est décisif pour comprendre le texte nysséen. En particulier, les changements intervenus entre la composition du *Contre Eunome* de Basile et celui de Grégoire, mais aussi au fur et à mesure de la rédaction des trois livres nysséens, sont fondamentaux pour bien interpréter leurs relations réciproques. Ce contexte est marqué au

25 Une telle conclusion résulte de la combinaison des hypothèses de J. Leemans, « On the Date of Gregory of Nyssa's first Homilies on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (Ia and Ib) », *JThS* 52 (2001) 92-97, sur la datation de ces homélies, et de la reconsidération de la date d'*Inscr.* par J. Reynard, *Grégoire de Nysse*, 13-15.

26 Pour deux tentatives réalisées dans un état d'esprit assez différent, voir P. Maraval, *Grégoire de Nysse, Lettres. Introduction, texte critique, traduction, notes et index*, SC 363, Paris 1990, *passim*, et A. M. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa : the Letters*, SVigChr 83, Leiden/Boston 2007, en particulier 71-72 (tableau récapitulatif) ; voir aussi la présentation générale, chronologico-thématique, de D. Teske, *Gregor von Nyssa, Briefe, eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert*, BGrL 43, Stuttgart 1997, 4-31.

27 Pour une étude de ces deux dossiers épistolaires, voir M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse. Polémique littéraire et exégèse dans le Contre Eunome*, Études augustiniennes, série Antiquité 193, Paris 2012, 111-133. On peut rapprocher la *Lettre* 15 de Grégoire de la *Lettre* 20 de Basile de Césarée, lettre d'envoi de son propre *Contre Eunome* à un autre sophiste, Léontios.

premier chef par les trois assemblées d'évêques réunies à Constantinople pendant cette période, le concile de 381, les synodes de 382[28] et de 383, auxquels Grégoire a participé[29]. Pendant la composition du troisième livre, Grégoire a donc été régulièrement présent à Constantinople et a joué un rôle important dans la politique ecclésiale : en juin 381, il prononça l'éloge funèbre de Mélèce à Constantinople, et la loi théodosienne du 30 juillet fit de lui l'un des référents de l'orthodoxie pour le diocèse du Pont[30]. En 385-386, il prononça encore les oraisons funèbres de deux membres de la famille impériale, Pulchérie et Flacilla. Grégoire semble donc être, pendant cette période, au sommet de son influence théologico-politique[31].

Cependant, *Contre Eunome* III n'est pas une intervention politico-ecclésiale comparable aux discours conciliaires, ou au discours *Sur la divinité du Fils*, ni même à la *Réfutation*. Ce traité, en effet, s'il est bien une réfutation suivie de la *Profession de foi* d'Eunome comme le *Contre Eunome* l'est de l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, prend pour l'essentiel la forme d'un *compendium* de la doctrine anti-eunomienne, beaucoup plus court et parfois plus simple. Il a donc pu être destiné à un public plus large que les seuls *periti*, évêques et théologiens. Les trois livres contre Eunome, au contraire, sont une œuvre de très haut niveau théologique et d'une taille impressionnante.

II Transmission et réception du texte

Leur transmission, depuis leur rédaction jusqu'à nos jours, ne s'est cependant pas faite sans difficulté, du fait même de leur taille et de leur complexité. Les manuscrits grecs qui nous les ont conservés, en tout ou partie, sont relativement peu nombreux, par rapport aux témoins d'autres œuvres de Grégoire[32]. En outre, aucun codex ne nous a conservé les livres dans leur ordre d'origine, et ce n'est que par l'intermédiaire de la tradition indirecte qu'il a été possible

28 Cf. Théodoret, *HE.*, V 8,11-9,19 (GCS 288,28-294,26).

29 Le fait est attesté pour les réunions de 381 et 383, du fait des discours qui y furent prononcés par lui. Il n'y a pas de témoignage direct de sa participation au synode de 382, par ailleurs assez mal connu.

30 *Code Théodosien*, XVI, 1, 3 (Mommsen 834,9-10).

31 Voir G. May, « Gregor von Nyssa in der Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit », *JÖB* 15 (1966) 105-133.

32 Vingt-trois manuscrits, contre une cinquantaine de témoins des *Homélies sur le Cantique*, par exemple, texte pourtant relativement long.

de reconstituer la disposition originale en trois livres, suivis de la *Réfutation*[33]. Plusieurs manuscrits, en outre, ne transmettent du troisième livre que le premier tome[34].

D'autre part, le rapprochement avec la tradition indirecte, et en particulier avec le *Contre Damien* de Pierre de Callinice, rédigé peu après 588 et conservé uniquement en syriaque[35], permet de mesurer combien la tradition directe grecque est défaillante. Le texte utilisé et abondamment cité par Pierre de Callinice remonte en effet à un état plus ancien et moins endommagé que celui dont dépend toute la tradition grecque directe. Ce témoignage permet de combler une partie de la grande lacune du livre I[36], mais aussi de compléter en totalité une lacune dont l'ampleur était autrement inconnue à l'intérieur du livre III[37]. La prise en compte de ce témoignage dans la nouvelle édition de l'œuvre actuellement en préparation pour la collection des *Sources chrétiennes* devrait donc permettre d'améliorer le texte en plusieurs points.

La réception du texte dans le monde hellénophone, telle qu'elle peut être évaluée grâce à la tradition indirecte, fait une très large place au livre III, plus qu'aux livres I et II ; certains passages de ce livre (par exemple la fin du troisième tome) ont connu une réelle fortune et ont été cités à de très nombreuses reprises[38]. L'examen de cette postérité exigerait un travail séparé, qui

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33 Voir F. Diekamp, « Literargeschichtliches zu der Eunomianischen Kontroverse », *ByZ* 18 (1909) 1-13, ici 8-10 ; W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni Contra Eunomium libri,* GNO II, Leiden 1960, VI-XIII.

34 Patmos, Monê tou hagiou Iohannou tou Theologou, 46 (et sa copie, Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1773) ; Hagion Oros, Monê Batopediou, 129 ; Grottaferrata, Bibl. della Badia greca, B α III (gr. 341) ; Madrid, BN, 4857 ; d'autres manuscrits, copies partielles, ne transmettent aucun élément de *Contre Eunome* III : Vaticano, BAV, Ottob. gr. 241 ; Paris, BnF, suppl. gr. 174 ; suppl. gr. 81 ; Lesbos, Monê tou hagiou Theologou, 6 ; Brescia, Bibl. civica Queriniana, A IV 3 ; Hagion Oros, Monê Batopediou, 541.

35 R. Y. Ebied – A. Van Roey – L. R. Wickham, *Petri Callinicensis Patriarchae Antiocheni Tractatus contra Damianum II-III*, Turnhout/Louvain 1994-2003, CChrSG 29, 32, 35, 54 ; pour la date du traité, voir CChrSG 29, XX-XXI.

36 Entre *Eun.* I.438 et 439 : voir Pierre de Callinice, *Contre Damien*, III XXI,236-249 (CChrSG 35, traduction l. 208-219) ; XLIX,123-163 (CChrSG 54, traduction l. 113-149) ; il s'agit de deux extraits du chapitre 30 de *Contre Eunome* I.

37 *CE* III 8,25 (GNO II 247,21) ; citation du passage dans Pierre de Callinice, *Contre Damien*, III XLV,156-200 (CChrSG 54, traduction l. 142-182).

38 *CE* III 3,63-66 (GNO II 130,16-131,13) : Actes du concile de Constantinople III 340, 23-342, 15 (ACO II.II.1) ; *CE* III 3,64-66 (GNO II 130,24-131,11) : Actes du concile du Latran a. 649, 428 Flor. 24 (ACO II.II.3) ; *CE* III 3,64 (GNO II 130,19-22) : Théodoret de Cyr, *Eranistes*, flor. I, 51 (Ettlinger 106,10-12) ; *CE* III 3,65-66 (GNO II 130,28-131,13) : Paris. gr. 1115, n° 87 (A. Alexakis,

permettrait sûrement de mieux comprendre la manière dont les textes doctrinaux de l'évêque de Nysse ont été reçus pendant la période byzantine.

III Structure de *Contre Eunome* III

Si la transmission du texte témoigne de perturbations anciennes et importantes, c'est que la forme prise par l'ouvrage ne facilitait pas une juste compréhension de sa structure. Comment comprendre l'articulation de ce vaste traité ? Il faut tout d'abord garder à l'esprit que *Contre Eunome* III, tout comme *Contre Eunome* I et II (et la *Réfutation*), est la réfutation suivie d'un texte adverse. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'une réponse aux positions théologiques d'Eunome, mais bien de la réfutation, page à page, ligne à ligne, d'un texte donné, l'*Apologie de l'apologie*. Un tel écrit échappe totalement à nos catégories modernes : dans la polémique la plus exacerbée, quel qu'en soit le domaine, jamais on ne trouve aujourd'hui une démarche semblable. Dans l'Antiquité chrétienne, en revanche, une telle forme est courante et largement pratiquée, aussi bien dans le domaine grec que dans le domaine latin, et elle trouve une postérité encore importante dans le monde byzantin. C'est ce qui explique la structure

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Codex Parisinus graecus 115 and its Archetype, Washington 1996, 276) ; *Doctrina Patrum*, 15, XIX (Diekamp 97) ; *Catena Nicetae in Lc*, extrait 3175 (Krikonès Iviron 371, f. 598 ; Vat. gr. 1661, f. 299v) ; *CE* III 3,65-66 (GNO II 130,28-131,10) : Facundus d'Hermiane, *Défense des trois chapitres*, XI IV,1 (CChrSL 90A 340) ; *CE* III 6,65-66 (GNO II 130,28-131,8) : Théodoret de Cyr, *Eranistes*, flor. III, 48 (Ettlinger 241,21-28) ; *CE* III 3,65-66 (GNO II 130,28-131,7) : Gélase, *De duabus naturis*, n° 24 (ABAW.PH 10 99,31-36) ; *CE* III 3,65 (GNO II 130,28-131,1) : Anastase, *Viae dux*, XXIII 2,69-72 (CChrSG 8 311) ; Michel Glykas, *Quaestiones in s. scripturas*, 79 (Eustratiadès 308,19-22) ; *CE* III 3,65 (130,28-29) : Léonce de Jérusalem, *Témoignages des saints*, 68 (Gray [OECT] 68,15-17) ; Jean Damascène, *Exposé de la foi*, 59,153-154 (PTS 12 150) ; *CE* III 3,65-66 (GNO II 131,5-7) : Éphrem d'Antioche, cité par Photius, *Bibliothèque*, 229 (CUFr 264b25-29) ; *CE* III 3,66 (GNO II 131,6-13) : Léonce de Byzance, *Adversus nestorianos et eutychianos*, Vat. gr. 2195, p. 37-38 (*Oxon. Laud.* B92, ff. 49v-50) ; *CE* III 3,66 (GNO II 131,6-10) : Anastase, *Viae dux*, XIII 3,110-114 (CChrSG 8 221) ; *CE* III 3,66 (GNO II 131,6-8) : Florilège nestorien de Cambridge, *Réfutation des anathématismes de Cyrille*, *testimonium* 31 (Abramowski – Goodman 86,3-5[trad.]) ; *CE* III 3,66 (GNO II 131,6-7) : Anastase, *Viae dux*, X 1,2,77-79 (CChrSG 8 150-151) ; *CE* III 3,66-67 (GNO II 131,13-22) : Justinien, *Contre les trois chapitres*, 48 (ABAW.PH 18 59,9-13) ; *CE* III 3,67 (GNO II 131,19-132,7) : Sévère d'Antioche, *Propositions hérétiques* (CSCO 244 300,10-22) ; *Contra additiones Juliani* (CSCO 295 18,16-28) ; *CE* III 3,67 (GNO II 132,3-7) : Léonce de Byzance, *Adversus nestorianos et eutychianos*, Vat. gr. 2195, p. 116 ; Nicéphore de Constantinople, *Contra Eusebium*, 66,7 (Pitra 485,25) ; *CE* III 3,68 (GNO II 132,26-133,4) : Pierre de Callinice, *Contre Damien*, III XIX,306-313 (CChrSG 32 529).

même de l'ouvrage : citation du texte adverse, réponse – plus ou moins développée, plus ou moins libre. Cela établi, comment les quelques trois cent pages de *Contre Eunome* III sont-elles organisées?

1 *Tomes et chapitres*

Il faut tout d'abord évaluer la pertinence des divisions de l'œuvre telles qu'elles nous ont été transmises. Je présenterai tout d'abord ce point à partir de la tradition manuscrite et des sources anciennes, avant d'envisager la chose d'un point de vue interne à l'œuvre.

a Tradition manuscrite

Si l'on suit les indices donnés par les manuscrits, et repris dans les éditions de 1615, 1618 et 1638, dont la dernière est reproduite par la *Patrologia graeca*, comme dans l'édition de Fr. Oehler, le *Contre Eunome* est constitué de treize livres. Ainsi que l'ont montré Fr. Diekamp et W. Jaeger[39], il faut en fait reconstituer une structure originale en trois livres (plus un, la *Réfutation*). Le troisième livre du *Contre Eunome* proprement dit se trouva divisé en dix tomes, ce qui ne fut pas le cas des deux premiers. La tradition indirecte permet de faire remonter au plus tard au sixième siècle cette division interne[40] ; on verra cependant que des indices liés au contenu conduisent à ne pas attribuer à Grégoire lui-même cette division, et donc à situer son introduction entre la fin du 4^{e} s. et le 6^{e} s.

Un dernier indice pourrait guider la lecture : on trouve en effet dans les manuscrits une division en chapitres, dont les éditions, jusqu'à celle de W. Jaeger incluse, ne reproduisent que la table initiale. Cependant, il faut introduire ici une distinction entre les chapitres du livre I et ceux du livre III. Ceux du livre I sont présents dans les différentes branches de la tradition manuscrite grecque et apparaissent toujours à la même place dans le texte[41] ; on s'accorde à les faire remonter à Grégoire lui-même. En outre, ces chapitres

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39 Voir *supra*, n. 33.

40 C'est de nouveau le témoignage de Pierre de Callinice qui est déterminant en la matière, même si les témoignages réunis par Fr. Diekamp donnaient déjà des éléments importants. Voir en particulier l'explication de la différence entre les deux systèmes de désignation des livres donnée par Pierre, et appuyée sur des citations de Sévère d'Antioche, en *Contre Damien*, III XIX,224-525 (CChrSG 32, traduction l. 208-475). L'intérêt de ces textes pour comprendre la transmission du *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire avait déjà été indiquée par R. Y. Ebied – A. Van Roey – L. R. Wickham, *Peter of Callinicum, Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, Louvain 1981, 45, n. 7.

41 M. Cassin, « Les kephalaia du livre I », in : R. Winling, *Grégoire de Nysse, Contre Eunome I, 147-691*, SC 524, Paris 2010, 359-364.

sont utilisés dès le sixième siècle pour se référer avec précision à tel ou tel passage du livre I[42], et ces emplois confirment le témoignage des manuscrits grecs sur la position des chapitres dans le texte.

En revanche, les chapitres du livre III sont rédigés d'une manière très différente, beaucoup plus maladroite[43] ; ils n'apparaissent dans la tradition manuscrite que dans les témoins de l'une des sous-familles et sont totalement inconnus de la tradition indirecte[44]. Il n'y a donc pas à leur accorder plus de poids qu'à une lecture assez ancienne – très probablement postérieure au 6e s. – mais pas particulièrement approfondie de l'œuvre. On voit que, pour cette question de la structure du livre III, manuscrits ou sources anciennes ne nous apportent que peu d'éléments positifs.

b Examen interne : pertinence des tomes

Un examen interne est plus décourageant encore : en effet, si la division en tomes obéit dans l'ensemble à une certaine logique, une étude détaillée montre qu'elle est loin d'être totalement satisfaisante. J'en prendrai ici un seul exemple, dans la mesure où cette étude est plus à sa place dans le commentaire de chacun des tomes. En *Contre Eunome*, III 3,15-25, Grégoire cite un long fragment d'Eunome – le plus long du traité[45] – dont la réfutation s'étend ensuite sur plus de deux tomes (*CE* III 3,26-5,17). La réponse de Grégoire s'articule en sept éléments, censés répondre chacun à l'un des griefs d'Eunome, et qui remplissent les tomes 3 et 4 ; une dernière partie, qui correspond à la fin du fragment eunomien (*CE* III 3,25) et porte sur 2 Co 3, 17, est rejetée au début du tome 5.

Résumons : la structure en dix tomes n'est pas absurde ; elle est commode, en outre, et c'est d'ailleurs pour cette raison qu'elle a été retenue ici afin de structurer le commentaire du texte. Cependant, elle n'est pas entièrement

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42 C'est le cas, de manière à peu près systématique, chez Pierre de Callinice (cf. *supra* n. 35), mais également dans les actes du Concile de Constantinople III (680-681), ACO II.2.1-2, 306,5-9, ou encore dans l'*Anonyme sur Bekkos et Photius*, Flor. I, n° 5-7 (V. Laurent – J. Darrouzès, *Dossier grec de l'Union de Lyon* (*1273-1277*), Paris 1976, 528-537, ici 534-535), ou bien dans les *Refutationes* de Jean VI Cantacuzène, II 1,8-17 (CChrSG 16).

43 La question de la nature de la division en chapitre des différents livres du *Contre Eunome* a été souvent évoquée sans jamais recevoir de traitement définitif ; voir cependant W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni Contra Eunomium libri*, GNO II, Leiden 1960, IX, XVI-XVIII ; J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa*, 73-75.

44 Firenze, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, plut. 6.17 ; Vaticano, BAV, Vat. gr. 447. Pour leur position dans ces deux manuscrits, voir le tableau donné en annexe p. 29-31.

45 Le fragment occupe 142 lignes de l'édition Jaeger ; en comparaison, l'important fragment doctrinal qui ouvre la seconde partie du livre I (151-155) occupe 53 lignes de la même édition ; l'un des plus longs fragments du livre II (487-488) occupe 24 lignes.

satisfaisante, dans la mesure où elle ne rend pas parfaitement compte de l'organisation du texte nysséen, et il est indispensable de garder une grande liberté vis-à-vis d'elle dans l'étude de l'œuvre.

2 *Structure interne : Eunome, Basile, Eunome, Grégoire*

Si l'on se penche maintenant sur le fonctionnement du texte même de l'évêque de Nysse, la situation n'est pas plus simple. En effet, au premier abord, il semble y avoir un fil conducteur évident pour lire la réfutation de Grégoire : la trame du texte est fournie par le texte qu'il réfute, et qu'il dit suivre pas à pas. Mais ce texte ne nous est pas intégralement conservé, et les extraits retenus par l'évêque de Nysse ne nous en restituent pas nécessairement les étapes essentielles.

a L'*Apologie de l'apologie*, fil conducteur du texte nysséen?

Si l'auteur affirmait en effet au début de l'œuvre (*CE* I 24)[46] qu'il allait réorganiser la matière adverse, cette affirmation ne portait en fait que sur la première section du livre I (*CE* I 1-146), qui est résolument à part dans le traité. Cependant, l'évêque de Nysse ne dit jamais explicitement qu'il suit l'ordre du texte eunomien, contrairement à Origène dans le *Contre Celse*, par exemple[47]. En l'absence d'un discours de la méthode, il ne reste qu'à s'appuyer sur des indices, qui paraissent toutefois probants. Grégoire indique en quelques endroits qu'il va chercher plus loin un passage d'Eunome, afin de le rapprocher de la citation de son adversaire qu'il réfute alors[48] ; en d'autres lieux, il signale qu'il laisse de côté un peu du texte d'Eunome, soit qu'il l'ait déjà traité, soit qu'il ne présente pas d'intérêt doctrinal[49]. Le plus souvent, cependant, il indique que le passage d'Eunome qu'il retient se situe à la suite du précédent, ou peu après[50].

Ces indices suffisent, me semble-t-il, pour reconstituer la manière dont Grégoire procède : il suit dans ses grandes lignes *l'ordre* du texte d'Eunome, tout en s'autorisant de temps à autre des écarts, lorsque le processus de la réfutation le justifie. Cela ne signifie pas, cependant, qu'il en suive *la structure* :

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46 Voir M. Cassin, « Réfuter sans lasser le lecteur : pratique de la réfutation dans le *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire de Nysse », *StPatr* 47 (2010) 71-76, p. 73.

47 Origène, *Contre Celse*, Prol. 6 ; I 41, etc.

48 *CE* III 1,7 (GNO II 6,3-6) ; 3,32 (GNO II 119,6-9) ; 7,7 (GNO II 217,13-16).

49 *CE* III 4,39 (GNO II 149,6-8) ; 5,19 (GNO II 166,24-27), etc.

50 R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius, The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 92 et n. 93-95 (mais toutes les références données ne correspondent pas forcément à l'enchaînement du texte d'Eunome) ; voir aussi *CE* III 2,82 (GNO II 79,15-21), 88 (GNO II 82,6-9), 104 (GNO II 86,27-28), 117 (GNO II 91,4), etc.

rien ne nous prouve qu'il retient les passages les plus significatifs de l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, ou du moins qu'il en rend convenablement l'argumentation et la progression. Au contraire, le procédé même de la réfutation doit nous inviter à la prudence : toutes les armes sont bonnes pour réfuter Eunome, et nous ne pouvons écarter la possibilité que Grégoire laisse délibérément de côté des passages importants du texte de son adversaire.

En tout cas, les éléments fournis par les commentaires de Grégoire sur le texte qu'il réfute, si abondants soient-ils par rapport à ceux d'autres auteurs, ne nous permettent en aucun cas de reconstituer la structure de l'œuvre eunomienne.

b Structure et histoire longue : *Apologie* d'Eunome, *Contre Eunome* de Basile, *Apologie de l'apologie* d'Eunome, *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire

Mais la question, posée au niveau des rapports entre l'œuvre de Grégoire et celle d'Eunome, dont nous n'avons plus que des fragments, rebondit encore : en effet, l'*Apologie de l'apologie* d'Eunome est à son tour une réfutation du *Contre Eunome* de Basile. À une étape encore antérieure, l'œuvre de Basile réfutait l'*Apologie* d'Eunome. On peut résumer ces éléments, pour le troisième livre de Grégoire, dans un tableau, qui pourra sûrement encore être précisé[51].

Ce tableau, même s'il demanderait à être largement complété pour l'*Apologie*, traitée ici plus rapidement dans la mesure où elle n'est pas notre objet premier, est relativement instructif[52]. On note en effet que si Basile avait, dans ses grandes lignes, suivi la progression de l'*Apologie*, ce n'est pas la méthode que retient Eunome pour réfuter Basile : il n'hésite pas à faire des retours en arrière, ou à regrouper des passages en fonction d'un thème. En second lieu, nombre de chapitres basiliens n'apparaissent pas ici : il est impossible de dire

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51 Voir annexe 2, p. 31-33.

52 Les correspondances précises entre l'*Apologie* et le *Contre Eunome* de Basile – pas plus que celles qui unissent le *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire et celui de Basile, d'ailleurs (voir cependant B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du* Contre Eunome *avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Namur 1994, 26-27, qui reste cependant assez imprécis) – n'ont jamais été traitées dans le détail, ni par R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius, The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, ni par B. Sesboüé – G. M. De Durand – L. Doutreleau, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome ; Eunome, Apologie. Introduction, édition et traduction*, SC 299, 305, Paris 1982, 1983, ni par B. Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité. Un acte théologique au IV^e^ siècle. Le rôle de Basile de Césarée dans l'élaboration de la doctrine et du langage trinitaire*, Paris 1998, ni par A. Negro – D. Ciarlo, *Eunomio, « Apologia » ; Basilio di Cesarea, « Contro Eunomio ». Introduzione, traduzione e note*, Roma 2007.

si Eunome les avait purement et simplement laissés de côté, ou si c'est au contraire Grégoire qui, dans son processus de sélection au sein du texte eunomien, n'a pas retenu les sections qui les concernaient.

Demeure en effet une grande inconnue : quelle part du texte d'Eunome Grégoire nous rapporte-t-il ? On pourrait chercher des points de comparaison : puisque nous possédons encore la *Profession de foi* d'Eunome à laquelle répond la *Réfutation*, on peut mesurer la part du texte d'Eunome que cite son adversaire: 60 % environ, alors que le *Contre Eunome* de Basile ne cite que 25 % de l'*Apologie*. Mais il faut prendre en compte la longueur des textes considérés : l'*Apologie* est quatre fois plus longue que la *Profession de foi*. Or l'*Apologie de l'apologie* était bien plus importante encore[53]. Il est donc probable que Grégoire ne nous en rapporte qu'une infime partie.

En outre, ce tableau permet de noter que de larges portions du texte nysséen n'ont pas de correspondant direct, ni dans les citations qu'il fait de l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, ni éventuellement dans le *Contre Eunome* de Basile : Grégoire conserve donc une certaine marge de manœuvre, alors même qu'il réfute de manière suivie le texte de son adversaire. Ces espaces de liberté sont très importants, puisqu'ils constituent des lieux où Grégoire développe librement sa pensée, selon la pente qui lui est propre et presque sans plus être contraint par le contenu du texte adverse. Ils sont en cela comparables, dans une certaine mesure, aux *corollaires* des commentaires de Simplicius, et plus largement aux digressions des commentaires néoplatoniciens tardifs[54]. J'étudierai un peu plus loin quelques exemples plus en détail[55].

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53 Dans la mesure où il est possible d'extrapoler la taille du traité. Plusieurs indices, cependant, suggèrent que l'*Apologie de l'apologie* était sensiblement plus longue que les autres traités d'Eunome conservés. Tout d'abord, l'œuvre était divisée en cinq livres ; or ni l'*Apologie*, ni la *Profession de foi* ne présentent de divisions internes. En second lieu, on peut noter que les réfutations qui lui ont été consacrées sont d'une taille importante, qu'il s'agisse de celle de Grégoire de Nysse, seule conservée, ou de celle de Théodore de Mopsueste, à en croire Photius (*Bibliothèque*, 4 [CUFr 3a40-41] : 25 livres ; sur cette œuvre, voir R. P. Vaggione, « Some Neglected Fragments of Theodore of Mopsuestia's Contra Eunomium », *JThS* 31 (1980) 403-470). La notice 138 du même ouvrage de Photius (CUFr 97b11-98a16), dont la première partie est consacrée à l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, ne donne aucune information sur sa taille – si ce n'est que Photius n'en connaît déjà plus que trois livres.

54 Voir en particulier l'étude de P. Golitsis, *Les commentaires de Simplicius et de Jean Philopon à la Physique d'Aristote*, Berlin, New York 2008, 86-203.

55 Voir *infra* p. 24-26.

Nous nous trouvons donc face à une aporie : la structure du texte de Grégoire doit dépendre, d'une façon ou d'une autre, de celle de l'œuvre d'Eunome, mais nous ne pouvons reconstituer cette dernière. Pour comprendre le fonctionnement du *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire, il nous manque donc un élément essentiel. Nous sommes en effet dans la quasi impossibilité de savoir ce que l'évêque de Nysse retient et ce qu'il écarte, ce qu'il réfute et ce qu'il laisse de côté. Il nous est donc impossible d'évaluer la portée de la réfutation nysséenne, et sa bonne foi, la liberté qu'il prend par rapport aux arguments adverses. Nous sommes contraints à faire confiance au réfutateur, alors même qu'il a un intérêt direct et immédiat à *paraître* l'emporter. Autrement dit, puisque nous n'avons accès qu'à la réfutation, nous ne pouvons juger vraiment de sa valeur, ni des positions d'Eunome, et nous sommes réduits à une longue enquête pour mesurer la part d'initiative nysséenne. En revanche, il nous est tout à fait loisible d'étudier l'élaboration théologique de Grégoire, ses constructions littéraires et exégétiques, à condition de tenir compte du double fait qu'elles appartiennent à la réfutation d'Eunome et qu'elles ne sont pas nécessairement des réponses à tel ou tel de ses arguments, moins encore des réponses probantes.

IV Vue d'ensemble sur le livre III : réfutation et élaboration libre

Sans prétendre empiéter sur l'examen détaillé de chaque tome, je souhaiterais proposer ici deux perspectives transversales, qui concernent, l'une, la forme littéraire de l'œuvre, l'autre, les contenus qui ne relèvent pas directement de la controverse avec Eunome.

1 *Forme littéraire*

Le *Contre Eunome*, en effet, n'est pas une simple discussion théologique sur la juste manière de comprendre les rapports intra-trinitaires ou la nature de la seconde et de la troisième Personnes divines. Ainsi que le montre clairement le prologue[56], le but de Grégoire est de mettre à terre son adversaire[57], et tous les moyens sont bons pour cela. La conclusion du dixième tome, qui n'est marquée ni par une synthèse doctrinale, ni par une prière ou toute autre forme d'élévation spirituelle, est simplement indiquée par une image polémique supplémentaire, lorsque Grégoire compare Eunome à Démosthène, de

56 Voir dans ce volume l'analyse qu'en propose A. Capone, « Challenging the Heretic : the preface of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* III », p. 512-527.

57 Εἰ [...] τὸν ἀνταγωνιστὴν [...] ἢ τρισὶ πτώμασι κατὰ τὸν ἀθλητικὸν καταβληθῆναι νόμον, [...], ἐπεὶ οὖν δὶς ἤδη καταβληθεὶς ἐν τοῖς προλαβοῦσι λόγοις Εὐνόμιος ... (*CE* III 1,1 [GNO II 3,1-8]).

manière ironique bien entendu[58]. Le livre III s'ouvre et se clôt sur des passages où la rhétorique polémique l'emporte sur la réflexion théologique, contrairement à ce que l'on trouve par exemple dans le *Contre Eunome* de Basile, qui se termine par un point théologique, et s'ouvre même vers une perspective eschatologique[59].

Il n'est pas sans intérêt, de ce fait, de prêter attention à la place qu'occupent la polémique, les attaques *ad hominem*, dans le traité de l'évêque de Nysse. Car, si le ton est presque de bout en bout polémique, on note la présence de séquences où les attaques contre la personne d'Eunome prennent toute la place, ou peu s'en faut ; ce sont d'ailleurs les passages les plus élaborés sur le plan littéraire, ceux qui font le plus appel aux sources classiques, à un vocabulaire rare, à des images recherchées. J'ai déjà eu l'occasion d'étudier l'une de ces sections, située dans le tome 5 (*CE* III 5,23-25)[60], et plusieurs autres lieux se prêteraient à une telle analyse[61]. Ces passages, d'un langage souvent violent et peu amène pour l'adversaire, constituent paradoxalement des espaces de respiration dans le cours de la réfutation théologique, une sorte de repos pour l'esprit, dont la tension intellectuelle peut alors se relâcher au profit du seul jugement littéraire. D'une certaine façon, ces sections jouent un rôle similaire à celui des comparaisons homériques ou des mythes platoniciens : elles offrent une respiration à l'auditeur ou au lecteur.

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58 *CE* III 10,50 (GNO II 309,14-17) : Δημοσθενικῷ γὰρ θυμῷ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον τονώσας ἄλλος τις ἡμῖν ἐξ Ὀλτισήριδος Παιανιεὺς ἀναπέφηνε, τὸ δριμὺ τοῦ ῥήτορος ἐν τῷ καθ' ἡμῶν ἀγῶνι μιμούμενος. Cf. également *CE* III 10,54 (GNO II 310,25-311,6). Pour l'analyse de ces passages, voir l'étude du 10e tome par M. Ludlow, « *Contra Eunomium* III 10 – Who is Eunomius? », p. 442-474, ainsi que M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse*, 173-187.

59 Basile, *CE* III 7,38-43 (SC 305 174-175) : Εὐσεβοῦς γάρ ἐστι διανοίας τὰ ἀποσιωπηθέντα ἐν ταῖς ἁγίαις Γραφαῖς εὐλαβεῖσθαι ἐπιφημίζειν τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, πεπεῖσθαι δὲ τὴν ἐμπειρίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκριβῆ κατάληψιν εἰς τὸν ὕστερον ἡμῖν ἀποκεῖσθαι αἰῶνα, ὅταν διαβάντες τὸ δι' ἐσόπτρου καὶ αἰνίγματος ὁρᾷν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, τῆς πρὸς πρόσωπον θεωρίας ἀξιωθῶμεν. « Car c'est le propre d'une pensée pieuse que de prendre garde à ne pas attribuer au Saint-Esprit ce que les saintes Écritures ont tu, et elle est persuadée que l'expérience et l'exacte compréhension de l'Esprit nous sont réservées pour le siècle à venir, lorsque, après avoir dépassé la vision de la vérité à travers un miroir et en énigme, nous serons jugés dignes de la contemplation face à face (cf. 1 Co 13, 12). » Voir cependant B. Sesboüé – G. M. De Durand – L. Doutreleau, *Basile de Césarée* t. II, 174-175, n. 2 et A. Negro – D. Ciarlo, *Eunomio*, 321, n. 39, qui soulignent à la fois que le troisième livre basilien ne comporte pas de véritable conclusion et qu'il se termine cependant sur une perspective ouverte sur l'eschatologie.

60 M. Cassin, « "Plumer Isocrate" : usage polémique du vocabulaire comique chez Grégoire de Nysse », *REG* 121 (2008) 783-796.

61 Voir des éléments complémentaires dans M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse*, 136-157.

Elles remplissent cependant, dans le même temps, une fonction à part entière dans la visée d'ensemble de l'œuvre. En effet, en déconsidérant la personne de son adversaire, Grégoire prépare la réfutation de ses idées et se rend par avance son public favorable. Mais en outre, la caractérisation rhétorique qu'il donne d'Eunome n'est pas sans lien avec le classement théologique qu'il souhaite lui appliquer. La manière dont l'évêque de Nysse décrit les travers de langage et de pensée d'Eunome fait déjà partie de la réfutation, dans la mesure où elle donne au lecteur des indices, plus ou moins transparents, sur la dangerosité et les déviances supposées de l'adversaire[62]. S'il ne s'agit pas de prendre ces affirmations de Grégoire pour argent comptant, dans la mesure où elles nous renseignent moins sur la pensée d'Eunome que sur la vision que son adversaire cherche à en donner, il ne faut pas pour autant les écarter comme matière dépourvue de valeur philosophique ou religieuse.

Il importe donc, lors de la lecture du traité, de considérer avec attention la part respective des raisonnements fondés et solides et celle des pures attaques contre Eunome, où la pensée de Grégoire se déforme pour mieux ridiculiser son adversaire. Ou plutôt, il est nécessaire de prêter une attention constante à l'entrelacement de ces deux domaines, dont j'ai ici caractérisé les pôles extrêmes, mais qu'il faut en fait se représenter comme un *continuum* reliant les deux extrêmes. Les « lieux polémiques » ou « lieux littéraires » que j'évoquais à l'instant ne sont en effet que la partie visible d'une réalité bien plus importante, et qui marque tout le traité : l'un des buts du texte – le plus important sans doute – est de réduire Eunome et ses positions théologiques à néant. En aucun cas, nous ne devons donc oublier cet objectif de l'auteur lorsque nous lisons le *Contre Eunome*, au risque de prendre pour des thèses nysséennes ce qui n'est qu'argument de circonstance.

2 *Contenu non directement lié à l'*Apologie de l'apologie

Mais l'autre pôle de ce *continuum* n'en est pas moins important. En effet, si d'un côté, la réfutation influe sur l'écriture nysséenne au point d'y occuper toute la place, en d'autres passages, Eunome, ses idées et son œuvre disparaissent totalement du champ pris en compte par Grégoire. À l'opposé de la polémique pure, il y a la théologie pure, si l'on peut dire ; autrement dit, à l'opposé de la pure attaque *ad hominem*, il y a une réflexion et une élaboration théologique ou exégétique détachées du contexte de la réfutation eunomienne.

En effet, comme je l'ai suggéré tout à l'heure, le contenu du *Contre Eunome* ne se réduit pas à ce que pourrait laisser supposer son but affiché. S'il s'agit bien d'une réfutation de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* telle que l'a rédigée Eunome,

62 Sur ce point, voir par exemple les déductions de M. Ludlow, « *Contra Eunomium* III 10 ».

le contenu en est plus large, ainsi que je le montrerai à partir de quelques exemples. On peut retenir en premier lieu le développement consacré, dans le premier tome, à l'explication de Pr 8, 22 : dans les écrits d'Eunome réfutés par les deux frères, y compris dans les fragments que cite Grégoire dans le *Contre Eunome*, Pr 8, 22 n'est pas explicitement mentionné, moins encore commenté ; cela ne signifie pas qu'Eunome ne l'emploie pas ailleurs, comme en *Apologie*, 26, chapitre qui n'est cependant pas réfuté par Basile[63]. Tout au plus la référence au verset est-elle sous-entendue lorsqu'Eunome dit le Fils « créé »[64]. Basile, comme Grégoire, traite de ce verset comme d'une objection que *pourrait* lui opposer son adversaire, ou plutôt ses adversaires, dans la mesure où, contrairement à l'usage le plus courant dans les deux *Contre Eunome*, ce n'est pas le singulier mais le pluriel qui est alors employé pour désigner la source de l'objection[65]. Les deux Cappadociens sont en cela les héritiers d'une tradition assez longue, puisque le premier arianisme avait explicitement utilisé ce

63 Il faut d'ailleurs prêter attention au terme grec ; on comprend mal pourquoi R. P. Vaggione, Eunomius, *The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987 renvoie, dans l'apparat d'*Apol.* 12, 2-3 (Vaggione 46) et 17, 13-14 (Vaggione 54), à Pr 8, 22, dans la mesure où le texte est γέννημα καὶ ποίημα. La seule citation explicite de Pr 8, 22 par Eunome se trouve en *Apol.* 26, 15-16 (Vaggione 70), chapitre dont l'appartenance au traité d'origine ne fait pas vraiment difficulté (R. P. Vaggione, *The Extant Works*, 12-14 ; B. Sesboüé – G. M. De Durand – L. Doutreleau, *Basile de Césarée* t. I, 55-58 ; A. Negro – D. Ciarlo, *Eunomio*, 13-14), mais qui n'a pas été réfuté par Basile. La citation de *Profession de foi*, 3,4-5 (Vaggione 152) ne porte pas sur le verbe 'créer', qui intéresse ici Grégoire, mais sur la question du Principe. On trouve également une citation en *Apol.* 28, 23-24 (Vaggione 74), directement employée pour justifier le statut de créature du Fils, mais ce chapitre, s'il est eunomien, est de provenance et de contexte inconnus (R. P. Vaggione, *The Extant Works*, 16 ; B. Sesboüé – G. M. De Durand – L. Doutreleau, *Basile de Césarée* t. I, 58).

64 Si l'on suppose une utilisation tacite de Pr 8, 22 pour appuyer la désignation du Fils comme créature, il n'aurait fallu relever que les occurrences où apparaissent soit le nom κτίσμα, soit le verbe κτίζω. Voir par exemple Eunome, *Apol.* 18, 3-4 (Vaggione 54), et l'emploi caractéristique d'*Apol.* 28, 21 (Vaggione 74), immédiatement suivi d'une référence à Pr 8, 22 (sur ce passage, voir la note précédente). Pour le verbe, *Apol.* 15, 15 (Vaggione 52) ; 18, 2 (Vaggione 54).

65 Basile, *CE* II 20,21 (οἱ δέ … καταφεύγουσι ; SC 305 82), qui emploie le pluriel pour désigner les tenants de la position qu'il réfute, et non le singulier, semblant ainsi viser plus largement que le seul Eunome. On trouve une formulation semblable chez Grégoire, tant en *CE* I 298 (GNO I 114,13-14 : κἄν τινες … προχειρίζωνται) qu'en *CE* III 1,21 (GNO II 10,25 : τάχα δ' ἂν ἡμῖν ἐκεῖνο προενεχθείη παρ' αὐτῶν …). On notera dans ces deux cas la formulation à la troisième personne du pluriel et l'emploi de l'optatif dans le second. C'est aussi la 3e personne du pluriel qui est employée en *Ref.* 110 (GNO II 358,7 : προφέρουσιν) et en *Simpl.* 62, 16 (GNO III.1 ; πρὸς δὲ τοὺς λέγοντας) – mais pour ce dernier texte, qui ne vise pas un adversaire unique et identifié, l'emploi du pluriel est moins surprenant, tout comme chez Grégoire de Nazianze (*Or.* 30 2,1 [SC 250 226] : ἔστι γὰρ ἓν μὲν αὐτοῖς).

verset[66]. Toutefois, si Basile consacre à Pr 8, 22 quelques lignes où point la gêne[67], Grégoire traite de l'exégèse de ce verset pendant plus de quinze pages, qui constituent une sorte de petit traité sur l'interprétation du livre des *Proverbes* et en particulier de Pr 8[68]. Une étude détaillée de cette section permet de montrer que, tout autant qu'Eunome ou tel autre de son parti, c'est l'interprétation du verset et du livre proposée par Eusèbe, dans sa controverse avec Marcel d'Ancyre, qui est visée[69]. En outre, cette explication se clôt par une exégèse spirituelle du passage, qui n'a plus rien à voir avec le débat théologique du *Contre Eunome* (*CE* III 1,55-59)[70]. Dans ces pages, l'évêque de Nysse explique un texte biblique, objet de plusieurs controverses, et utilise pour cela différentes approches exégétiques : une telle section, si elle importe à la réfutation d'ensemble des positions d'Eunome, échappe cependant au dialogue suivi que Grégoire mène avec l'*Apologie de l'apologie* dans le reste du *Contre Eunome*.

On pourrait prendre d'autres exemples encore, particulièrement nets dans le domaine de l'exégèse, comme l'explication du titre de « Premier-né », en *Contre Eunome* III 2,43-57. Ce développement est provoqué par une objection que Grégoire s'oppose à lui-même, à l'intérieur de son propre raisonnement[71]. De nouveau, l'évêque de Nysse dépend de la controverse antérieure contre

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66 Voir par exemple Athanase, *Contre les ariens*, I 53 (Athanasius Werke I.1.2 163), et la réfutation de l'exégèse arienne, II 19-82 (*ibid.* 195-260). Faut-il comprendre que la mention des πρόμαχοι τῆς αἱρέσεως par Grégoire (*CE* III 1,21 [GNO II 11,1]), auxquels il attribue l'habitude d'employer ce verset, laquelle justifie qu'il en prête l'emploi à ses adversaires du moment et en propose une explication, renvoie à cette première génération arienne? L'emploi en un sens temporel n'est pas impossible. Cependant, les références à Arius, dans le *Contre Eunome*, sont relativement rares et d'importance secondaire (*CE* I 45-46 [GNO I 37,15-22], modèle dépassé par Aèce ; 499 [GNO I 170,25-27], pendant de Sabellius ; III 9,55 [GNO II 285,1], dernier d'une liste d'hérétiques).

67 Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 20,21-44 (SC 305 82-84).

68 En *CE* I 298-301 (GNO I 114,17-116,1), Grégoire donne une première explication du texte, dont certains éléments préfigurent une partie de l'exégèse proposée en *CE* III 1, mais qui reste encore très proche des positions basiliennes. On trouve un autre exemple de petit traité consacré à l'exégèse de versets ayant une importance doctrinale dans l'*In illud : tunc et ipse* ; cependant, cette fois, l'explication exégétique est totalement séparée de la réfutation d'Eunome.

69 Voir l'analyse complète du passage dans M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse*, 223-274.

70 Sur cette section, voir *infra* l'analyse de V. Drecoll, p. 253-254.

71 *CE* III 2,43 (GNO II 66, 7-12) : ἀλλ' ὡς ἂν μή τι τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι τοῖς πόνοις ἡμῶν ἀμφίβολον ὑπολείποιτο τῶν τινα συνηγορίαν τοῖς αἱρετικοῖς δόγμασι παρεχομένων, ἐκ τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς ἄξιον ἂν εἴη καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς ἐξητασμένοις παρ' ἡμῶν προστεθῆναι. ἐροῦσι γὰρ ἴσως ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀποστολικῶν, ὧν ἡμεῖς ἐπεμνήσθημεν, ὅτι …

l'arianisme, et ici très nettement des *Discours contre les ariens* d'Athanase[72], mais le passage s'appuie également, en un point fondamental de son argumentation, sur un discours de Grégoire de Nazianze[73]. Rien, dans le texte d'Eunome tel qu'il nous est conservé, n'appelait une telle explication à cet endroit.

Une lecture continue du texte permettra sûrement d'isoler d'autres passages du même genre. À l'opposé du pôle polémique se dessine ainsi un pôle d'élaboration théologique « libre » : il restera donc à reconnaître les éléments qui échappent au contexte immédiat de la réfutation. Pourquoi sont-ils présents dans le texte nysséen ? Quelle est leur fonction, et quelle est leur portée ? Quelle importance avaient-ils pour leur auteur, qu'il les ait introduits ainsi dans un texte où ils constituent comme des corps étrangers ? Si le rôle qu'a joué la réponse aux positions dites « hérétiques » dans le développement et l'approfondissement de la théologie chrétienne est bien connu[74], il reste à étudier comment l'élaboration théologique a pu trouver place dans les interstices des réfutations, comme c'est le cas ici pour les passages évoqués. Il est possible que l'explication soit simplement à chercher dans l'atténuation du danger eunomien, qui aurait ainsi laissé à Grégoire plus d'espace pour élaborer des positions nouvelles sans nécessairement les opposer à celles de son adversaire. Mais sans doute, même dans cette hypothèse, le rôle de stimulant joué par l'écriture de son opposant ne doit pas être sous-estimé : si le traité d'Eunome n'est pas ici la cause réelle de certains développements nysséens, il en est du moins l'occasion immédiate.

V Quelques thèmes du livre III

Après ces remarques de portée générale, venons-en au contenu du *Contre Eunome* III : comment caractériser ce livre, par rapport aux deux premiers ? Sans doute faut-il retenir comme thème central le Fils, seconde Personne de

72 Athanase, *Contre les ariens*, II 61-64 (Athanasius Werke I.1.2 238-241).

73 Grégoire de Nazianze, *Or.* 40 2 (SC 358 198-200) ; pour la datation du discours, voir C. Moreschini – P. Gallay, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 38-41. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, SC 358, Paris 1990, 16-22, qui reprend les deux hypothèses (379-380 ou 380-381), avec une préférence pour la seconde. Dans les deux cas, le discours de Grégoire de Nazianze se situe donc avant la rédaction de *Contre Eunome* III.

74 Voir par exemple A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II^e-III^e siècles*, Paris 1985, t. I, 14-20. Pour une mise au point sur les problématiques récentes, voir A. Le Boulluec, « Orthodoxie et hérésie aux premiers siècles dans l'historiographie récente », in : S. Elm – É. Rebillard – A. Romano (eds.), *Orthodoxie, christianisme, histoire*, Roma 2000, 303-319.

la Trinité[75]. Si, étant donné l'objet général de la controverse avec Eunome, les deux premiers livres abordaient déjà cette question, c'était toutefois, en général, à travers d'autres perspectives : le premier livre partait plutôt du Père, tandis que le second accordait une place prépondérante à l'examen du langage humain. En termes de méthode, il faut retenir d'emblée que, dans le livre III, Grégoire prête une attention particulière à l'Écriture et à son explication[76]. Faut-il penser que l'enquête menée sur le Fils oblige davantage à prendre en compte le texte biblique que celle menée sur le Père, ou sur le langage ? Ou bien faut-il voir là un aspect de l'intérêt propre de l'évêque de Nysse pour l'Écriture, qui prendrait peu à peu le pas sur la réfutation d'Eunome ?

1 *Exégèse*

Si l'exégèse est très largement présente dans le troisième livre, ce n'est pas elle, cependant, qui le structure ; la progression de Grégoire – et moins encore celle d'Eunome – ne se fait pas de texte biblique en texte biblique, de verset controversé en verset controversé, comme on pourrait le penser au premier abord, comme il serait plus facile de le croire. Le livre III n'est pas non plus bâti comme une réfutation de l'exégèse proposée par Eunome, ou les eunomiens, d'un certain nombre de versets bibliques, décisifs pour comprendre ce qu'est la seconde Personne de la Trinité. En effet, Grégoire explique, plus ou moins longuement, plusieurs lieux vétéro et néotestamentaires ; ces explications remplissent toutefois des fonctions diversifiées et occupent des niveaux différents dans la structure du livre.

Ces exégèses, d'une part, sont dans des rapports variés avec le texte eunomien : réfutation d'une exégèse eunomienne, comme pour Ac 2,36 (*CE* III 3-4), Mc 10,18 (*CE* III 9) ou Jn 20,17 (*CE* III 10) ; explication d'un verset controversé, mais non utilisé par Eunome, comme Pr 8,22 (*CE* III 1)[77] ; réponse à une objection que Grégoire s'oppose à lui-même, comme pour les versets pauliniens contenant le titre de « Premier-né » (*CE* III 2), etc. D'autre part, les lieux exégétiques n'occupent pas toujours le niveau principal dans l'argumentation de Grégoire, mais peuvent aussi être utilisés à l'intérieur d'un argument plus vaste, comme simple illustration ou bien comme argument auxiliaire[78]. À ce

75 Voir par exemple B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 23.

76 Sans aller pour autant jusqu'à faire des passages exégétiques la structure du livre III, comme le propose B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 40, avec quelques réserves : « Se laissera-t-on guider par les citations bibliques et leur commentaire? L'idée nous tente. »

77 Cf. *supra*, p. 20-22.

78 On pense par exemple à *CE* III 1,70 (GNO II 29,1-12) et à l'usage particulier fait de Jn 16,21 : le verset est assez rarement employé, et le plus souvent comme témoin de la réalisation

titre, leur simple repérage n'est pas significatif pour comprendre la structure du livre, ni même un classement en fonction de l'ampleur du passage qui leur est consacré. Si l'explication du texte biblique fournit un élément significatif pour comprendre le livre III, si les exégèses proposées par Grégoire sont d'un grand intérêt théologique et nous éclairent sur les rapports de l'auteur avec le texte biblique, il est clair, cependant, que ce n'est pas là qu'il faut chercher la clef unique de sa lecture.

Un autre point, historiographique, vient confirmer *a posteriori* l'importance de l'exégèse dans le *Contre Eunome* III : c'est en effet dans cet ouvrage que Mariette Canévet avait voulu voir un tournant dans la pratique exégétique de Grégoire de Nysse, et comme le lieu d'élaboration et de première réalisation d'une méthode caractéristique de cet auteur[79]. On sait les réserves qu'une telle hypothèse a déjà suscitées chez d'autres commentateurs[80] ; on remarque aussi aisément, dans l'étude de M. Canévet, la faible place qui est faite aux sources de Grégoire, à ses modèles et à ses interlocuteurs : la « méthode nysséenne », si elle existe, ne sort pas toute armée de la tête de son auteur[81]. L'étude de l'exégèse dans le *Contre Eunome* III gagnera donc grandement à être accompagnée d'une double mise en perspective, par rapport aux auteurs antérieurs et contemporains de Grégoire, d'une part, par rapport aux autres œuvres de l'évêque de Nysse, d'autre part, et ce, afin de mieux comprendre quels sont les facteurs qui influent sur l'explication du texte biblique par Grégoire. Il n'est pas

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des prophéties de Gn 3 sur les souffrances de l'enfantement (voir par exemple Théophile d'Antioche, *À Autolycus*, II, 23 [SC 20 156]). On le trouve cependant également chez Grégoire, dans un contexte un peu différent, en *Eccl.* VI, 5 (GNO V 380, 15) et *An. et res.* 149B (Krabinger 140,7-10), toujours pour donner une formulation évangélique au fait humain de la naissance.

79 M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique. Étude des rapports entre le langage et la connaissance de Dieu*, Études augustiniennes, série Antiquité 99, Paris 1983, 268-273.

80 Voir par exemple J. Reynard, *Grégoire de Nysse*, 13-15.

81 Voir *a contrario* les vertes remarques qu'adresse M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, 268, n. 11, à l'étude de M. Van Parys, « Exégèse et théologie dans les livres Contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse : textes scripturaires controversés et élaboration théologique », in : M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse* (*Chevetogne 22-26 septembre 1969*), Leiden 1971, 169-196 : « En plein accord avec la recherche des sources de Grégoire menée dans cet article, nous pensons cependant que son auteur n'a pas vu ce qui rend, croyons-nous, décisive la démonstration du *C. Eun.* III, c'est-à-dire la découverte d'une nouvelle méthode exégétique. » Quelle que soit la justesse de la remarque, c'est peut-être justement cette différence d'attention accordée à l'histoire et aux sources qui explique la plus ou moins grande sensibilité de l'un et de l'autre à la nouveauté relative de la méthode nysséenne.

sûr, en particulier, qu'il soit possible de déterminer aussi aisément que le voudrait M. Canévet une progression linéaire et croissante de l'exégèse nysséenne ; les différences de contexte, de public et de genre littéraire peuvent amener l'auteur à modifier largement des interprétations que la critique contemporaine aurait tendance à tenir pour abouties, voire définitives.

2 *Philosophie et théologie*

Est-ce davantage dans une approche philosophique qu'il faudrait trouver ce qui unifie cet ouvrage? Si le livre II se construit assez nettement autour d'une réflexion sur la notion d'ἐπίνοια et plus largement sur la nature du langage[82], ce n'est pas le cas du livre III. On trouve bien, dans le tome 6, une petite section consacrée aux différents sens de γέννησις, étudiée jadis par Marguerite Harl[83] ; ailleurs, des réflexions sur les liens entre noms et substances (*CE* III 2,136-155 ; 5,18-64), sur le temps et le commencement (*CE* III 7,31-43), sur le sens de 'être' (*CE* III 8,32-42), etc. Rien, cependant, qui ait l'unité des réflexions des livres I et II. Une telle dispersion de la matière ne facilite pas l'enquête et il faut, le plus souvent, rassembler des éléments épars pour reconstituer les fondements philosophiques – et éventuellement les sources – de la pensée de Grégoire.

Il en va de même, me semble-t-il, pour la théologie : par exemple, le développement que Grégoire consacre à la lumière, engendrée ou inengendrée (*CE* III 10), ou celui qui porte sur la fonction démiurgique du Fils (*CE* III 9), pour ne prendre que deux exemples situés vers la fin du livre III, constituent des sections importantes, mais qui n'occupent pas une position centrale dans l'argumentation de l'œuvre. Faut-il voir, dans cette plus grande dispersion, dans cette fragmentation, un fidèle reflet du contenu de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* eunomienne, dont la structure aurait été moins dense au fur et à mesure de sa progression ? Ou bien faudrait-il y reconnaître plutôt un indice supplémentaire de la lassitude relative de l'évêque de Nysse, qui chercherait moins que dans les deux premiers livres à unifier et rassembler sa matière ? Une indication allant en ce sens pourrait être trouvée dans la plus grande fragmentation des citations d'Eunome dans les derniers tomes du livre III, qui pourrait correspondre soit à une plus grande dispersion de la pensée de l'adversaire, soit aux moindres efforts de Grégoire pour l'unifier. La question, difficile, mérite

82 Voir nombre d'études dans L. Karfíková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa*, mais aussi M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse*, 27-64 ; B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 167-220, ainsi qu'une approche assez différente dans S. Douglass, *Theology of the Gap. Cappadocian Language Theory and the Trinitarian Controversy*, New York 2005.

83 M. Harl, « À propos d'un passage du Contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse : aporroia et les titres du Christ en théologie trinitaire », in : *Le Déchiffrement du sens*, 281-290.

d'être posée. Dans tous les cas, ce troisième livre est très riche dans le domaine théologique, et offre bien des éclairages sur la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse ; encore faut-il repérer ces éléments dispersés, et évaluer chacune des pièces de ce puzzle, de cette mosaïque. Peut-on également reconnaître, dans certains de ces éléments, des pièces autonomes comparables aux développements exégétiques dont on a relevé l'absence de lien direct avec l'*Apologie de l'apologie* ? Une telle hypothèse demande à être vérifiée.

3 *Eunome*

Il ne faudrait pas oublier, enfin, l'autre protagoniste ; que nous apprend ce troisième livre sur Eunome? Rappelons tout d'abord que, pas plus dans le livre III que dans les deux précédents, il ne faut prendre pour argent comptant les accusations que Grégoire adresse à son adversaire à propos de ses allégeances supposées, tant dans le domaine philosophique que dans le domaine religieux. On s'est trop souvent contenté de s'appuyer sur la polémique de Grégoire, pour voir en Eunome un philosophe disciple d'Aristote ou des platoniciens, adepte des *Catégories*, mais aussi influencé par le judaïsme[84]. Une lecture attentive montre aisément que tous ces éléments, s'ils nous éclairent sur les méthodes polémiques de l'évêque de Nysse, nous apprennent fort peu sur les sources et les modèles de son adversaire. Les prendre au pied de la lettre conduira au mieux à répéter une orthodoxie figée, qui reconnaît avec soulagement Eunome comme un théologien dévoyé par la philosophie, dans la mesure où coïncident la position ecclésiale – Eunome est un hérétique – et les éléments présentés par Grégoire de Nysse – Eunome est un juif, un philosophe, tout sauf un chrétien de bon aloi.

À chaque étape, il est nécessaire de nous demander si les accusations adressées par Grégoire à Eunome sont fondées, c'est-à-dire si elles s'appuient sur des éléments importants de la pensée eunomienne, ou bien s'il ne s'agit que d'accusations sans preuves, d'erreurs d'interprétation dues à Grégoire ou, pire, de refus volontaires de comprendre la pensée de son adversaire. Autrement dit, c'est à nous de faire, sur nouveaux frais, le travail d'évaluation de la pensée eunomienne, à partir des éléments qui nous en sont accessibles, et en écartant résolument la présentation qu'en donne Grégoire de Nysse. Peut-être, au bout du compte, notre approche et celle de Grégoire coïncideront-elles, mais rien n'est moins sûr. Une troisième perspective, cependant, est possible : la

84 Sur cette question, voir la mise au point prudente et mesurée de G. M. De Durand, « Eunome », in : R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, Paris 2000, III, 234-333.

polémique de Grégoire peut aussi nous instruire sur ses préoccupations théologiques et politiques, plus que sur la pensée d'Eunome[85].

Prenons un exemple très simple : Grégoire ne cesse de dire, et beaucoup ont repris depuis cette position, qu'Eunome ne s'appuyait jamais sur l'Écriture, que les fondements de son raisonnement étaient à chercher dans la philosophie aristotélico-platonicienne[86]. Le long fragment consacré à l'interprétation d'Ac 2, 36 (*CE* III 3,15-25) nous permet pour une fois d'accéder à la pensée d'Eunome autrement qu'à travers des bribes de texte ou des traités très ramassés, comme l'*Apologie* ou la *Profession de foi*. Or ce fragment nous montre qu'Eunome s'appuie sur l'Écriture, qu'il la commente, et qu'il utilise pour cela des outils proches de ceux de Grégoire, comparant le verset avec d'autres textes néotestamentaires et retenant les mêmes auteurs de prédilection que Grégoire, Paul et Jean. Une étude détaillée montrerait sûrement des différences méthodologiques entre les deux manières de commenter l'Écriture ; qu'elles ne nous fassent pas oublier qu'Eunome s'attache pourtant à l'expliquer, et s'arrête longuement sur un verset important dans la controverse. Un tel phénomène était-il isolé dans l'*Apologie de l'apologie* ? À lire le *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire, il semble que c'était le cas ; cependant, l'évêque de Nysse a-t-il sélectionné, dans les passages qu'il cite, un échantillon représentatif du texte eunomien ? Autrement dit, ce n'est pas parce que Grégoire ne cite presque jamais de passages exégétiques qu'il n'y en avait pas dans l'œuvre d'Eunome. La mention, que l'on trouve dans l'*Histoire ecclésiastique* de Socrate (IV 7,7-8), d'une œuvre d'Eunome consacrée à l'*Épître aux Romains*, pourrait aller dans ce sens[87].

Je ne veux pas réhabiliter Eunome – non plus que le condamner. Simplement nous inviter à nous dégager de tous les a priori, de toutes les condamnations anticipées, que constituent le texte de Grégoire et la tradition ultérieure, lorsque nous cherchons à comprendre et expliquer la pensée d'Eunome.

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85 Voir en ce sens les contributions dans ce volume de M. Ludlow, « *Contra Eunomium* III 10 – Who is Eunomius? », p. 442-474, et F. Vinel, « Eunome, juif et païen à la fois, à la religion trompeuse », p. 718-730.

86 Voir par exemple J. L. Narvaja, *Teología y piedad en la obra de Eunomio di Cízico*, Roma 2003, qui, malgré certaines nuances, conclut à la place de plus en plus faible de l'Écriture et de la tradition dans l'œuvre d'Eunome, sans tenir compte ni des circonstances variées qui ont présidé à la rédaction des œuvres conservées, ni du biais introduit par le mode de transmission fragmentaire de l'*Apologie de l'apologie*. On se reportera avec profit à la tentative de R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000 (en particulier 78-147), d'élucider les cadres qui expliquent l'impossibilité totale d'une conciliation, ou même d'une compréhension, entre les Cappadociens et Eunome.

87 On peut noter que R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 253, n. 329, attribue le célèbre fragment eunomien sur la connaissance totale de l'essence divine par l'homme, cité par Socrate en *HE.* IV 7,13-14 (GCS 234,20-24), à ce commentaire.

Conclusion

Il serait périlleux et présomptueux, au début d'un tel ouvrage, de prétendre proposer une conclusion. Tout au plus voudrais-je insister sur une mise en garde : ne pas nous fier aux éléments qui paraissent évidents et traditionnels, avant d'en avoir évalué la validité. Quelle valeur a le découpage en dix tomes pour comprendre le texte nysséen ? L'image que nous donne Grégoire de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* et de son auteur a-t-elle d'autre fondement que la volonté de les réfuter ? Si Grégoire explique longuement tel texte biblique, est-ce nécessairement parce qu'Eunome en proposait une interprétation dans l'*Apologie de l'apologie* ? La liste pourrait être allongée, bien inutilement. Il me semble, cependant, que ce type de question est important, au moins à titre de purification préalable.

ANNEXE 1 kephalaia *du livre 3*

Tome et chapitre	Position dans les manuscrits L et V[88]
1.α′	1,1
1.β′	1,21
1.γ′	1,66
1.δ′	1,76+[89]
1.ε′	1,103
1.ς′	1,112
1.ζ′	1,126+[90]
2.α′	2,1
2.β′	2,27+[91]
2.γ′	2,42+[92]
2.δ′	2,58
2.ε′	2,82
2. ς′	2,100

88 L (Firenze, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, plut. 6.17 ; fin 10e-début 11e s.) et V (Vaticano, BAV, Vat. gr. 447 ; début du 12e s.) sont les seuls manuscrits qui transmettent la position de ces *kephalaia* du livre III.

89 *CE* III 1,76+ (GNO II 30,28).

90 *CE* III 1,126+ (GNO II 46,17).

91 *CE* III 2,27+ (GNO II 60,30).

92 *CE* III 2,42+ (GNO II 66,2).

ANNEXE 1

Tome et chapitre	Position dans les manuscrits L et V
2.ζ′	2,123
2.η′	2,137
2.θ′	2,151+[93]
2.ι′	2,161
3.α′	3,1
3.β′	3,12
3.γ′	3,26
3.δ′	3,46+[94]
3.ε′	3,56+[95]
4.α′	4,1
4.β′	4,17+[96]
4.γ′	4,24
4.δ′	4,36–[97]
5.α′	5,1
5.β′	5,32+[98]
5.γ′	5,39
5.δ′	550
5.ε′	5,56
6.α′	6,1
6.β′	6,15+[99]
6.γ′	6,23
6.δ′	6,32
6.ε′	6,42
6.ς′[100]	6,68
7.α′	7,1
7.β′	7,15+[101]

93 *CE* III 2,151+ (GNO II 101,9).
94 *CE* III 3,46+ (GNO II 124,8).
95 *CE* III 3,56+ (GNO II 127,30).
96 *CE* III 4,17+ (GNO II 140,8).
97 *CE* III 4,36- (GNO II 147,24).
98 *CE* III 5,32+ (GNO II 171,21).
99 *CE* III 6,15+ (GNO II 191, 5).
100 Ce chapitre n'est pas présent dans la table des chapitres éditée par W. Jaeger.
101 *CE* III 7,15+ (GNO II 220, 5).

ANNEXE 1

Tome et chapitre	Position dans les manuscrits L et V
7.γ′	7,26
7.δ′	7,44
8.α′	8,1
8.β′	8,13
8.γ′	8,24
8.δ′	8,32
9.α′	9,1
9.β′	9,10
9.γ′	9,25
9.δ′	9,42
9.ε′	9,47
10.α′	10,1
10.β′	10,18
10.γ′	10,26
10.δ′	10,39
10.ε′	10,46

ANNEXE 2 *Grégoire*, Contre Eunome *III ; Eunome*, Apologie de l'apologie *; Basile*, Contre Eunome *; Eunome*, Apologie

Grégoire, *CE* III	Eunome, *Apologia Apologiae*	Basile, *CE* II	Eunome, *Apologia*
III 1,4-20 ; 66-86	III 1,4.7		
III 1,21-65		II 20,21-44	
III 1,87-110	III 1,91		
III 1,126-138	III 1,127-129	II 2,32-40	
III 2,1-27	III 2,1	II 6,4-17	12,4-6
III 2,28-42 ; 58-65	III 2,28	II 6,9-12	12,4-6
III 2,43-57		II 23,32-49	16,1-4
III 2,66-71	III 2,66		
III 2,72-116	III 2,73	II 6,17-23 ; 6,33-7,22	12,6-10
III 2,117-122	III 2,104		

ANNEXE 2

Grégoire, *CE* III	Eunome, *Apologia Apologiae*	Basile, *CE* II	Eunome, *Apologia*
III 2,123-124	III 2,123		
III 2,125-135	III 2,125		
III 2,136-155	III 2,137	II 4,1-5,9	12,2-3
III 3,12-5.17	III 3,15-25	II 3,1-22	
III 5,18-38	III 5,18	II 4,1-9	
	III 5,26	II 9,14-16	
	III 5,32		
	III 5,34	II 10,28-44	
III 5,39-64	III 5,39-40	II 4-5	
	III 5,48	II 5,17-6,23	12,4-6
	III 5,61		
III 6,23-54 (cf. III 6.1-22)	III 6,23	II 11,4-6	12,10-12
III 6,55-59	III 6,56, 57	II 12,1-3	
III 6,60-80	III 6,61-62	II 13,1-17	
III 7,1-14	III 7,1		
	III 7,3	II 12,1-17	
	III 7,8		
	III 7,15 (1)	II 14,36-65	12,10-12
III 7,15-25	III 7,15 (2)	II 15,4-9	
III 7,26-60	III 7,26	II 15,33-43	12,10-12
	III 7,35		
III 7,61-64	III 7,61	II 16,1-23	
III 8,1-4	III 8,1	II 16,1-23	
III 8,5-12	III 8,5	II 16,15-23	
III 8,13-23	III 8,14	II 16,24-38	
III 8,24-26	III 8,25 (syr.)	II 16,30-38 (ou 9,18-27)	
III 8,27-31	III 8,27	II 17,13-62	13,7[102]
III 8,32-42	III 8,34	II 18,11-13	15,7
III 8,43-64	III 8,43	II 18,11-13	15,7

102 Citée par Grégoire en *CE* III 7,59, comme un appui admis par les deux partis et non comme un point à réfuter.

ANNEXE 2

Grégoire, *CE* III	Eunome, *Apologia Apologiae*	Basile, *CE* II	Eunome, *Apologia*
III 9,1-25	III 9,1	II 18,13-16	
III 9,26-31	III 9,27	II 18,17-47	
III 9,32-46	III 9,32	II 18,17-47	
	III 9,37		
	III 9,47	II 19,1-12	15,7
III 9,47-51	III 9,48		
III 9,52-53	III 9,52, 53	II 19,42-67	15,7-11
III 9,54-62	III 9,54	II 22,15-32	16,1-3
	III 9,61	II 22,27-32	
III 10,8-17 (cf. 1-7)	III 10,8	II 23,14-49	
III 10,18-25	III 10,19	II 25,1-21	19,9-15
III 10,26-28	III 10,26		
III 10,29-44	III 10,29		
	(déjà cité en III 3,32)		
	III 10,36		
III 10,45-49	III 10,46	II 28,27-42	
III 10,51-53	III 10,51	II 28,1-26	

PART TWO

English Translation

∵

Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three* Introduction to the Translation and Analysis

Stuart G. Hall

The translation follows the Greek text of *Contra Eunomium libri iteratis curis edidit* Wernerus Jaeger. *Pars altera*, Leiden 1960 (*GNO* 2) pp. 1–311. In the rare places where Jaeger's text is not exactly followed, the reasons are given in the footnotes. The translation generally follows the same principles as in my versions of *CE* I and II (*"El contra Eunomium I" en la produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa*, ed. L. F. Mateo-Seco – J. L. Bastero, *CTUN* 59, 1988, 21–133; *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, ed. L. Karfíková – S. Douglas – J. Zachhuber, *SVigChr* 82, 2000, 51–201).

As before, the purpose has been to present the ideas of St Gregory as accurately as possible, as they might have appeared if he had spoken modern English. Some terms are difficult to translate. I have tried to be consistent in translating οὐσία as 'being' or 'essential being', and δημιουργός as 'Designer'. For the important ὑπόστασις no regular word will do, so I have added to the translation the transliterated word in brackets, '(*hypostasis*)', wherever it occurs. Other Greek terms are occasionally added in brackets in the text or explained in the notes.

The bold numbers (**1.**, **2.**, etc.) are the sections as numbered by Jaeger. In the margin the page-numbers of Jaeger's edition are noted in square brackets. In dividing the book into paragraphs I have not always followed Jaeger, and in places I have begun major divisions of the text in the middle of a section. The headings of the main sections are my own, intended to help the reader understand Gregory's argument. They are no part of the text or its tradition, and may in places disagree with analyses offered by other scholars, including contributors to the Colloquium proceedings. They should be used with caution.

A draft of this translation was in the hands of the members of the Colloquium at Leuven, and I have benefited greatly from the comments and criticisms of some of them. I am sorry that not always have I remembered or noted who it was that helped me, so I cannot express my gratitude decently here. I must however acknowledge the help of Matthieu Cassin. In addition to comments, he generously supplied me with copies of his draft French translation and notes, which he is preparing towards the *SC* edition. This was immensely useful in my work, as it will be to the learned public when it is completed.

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Joseph O'Leary sent me many comments and suggestions, most of which are incorporated in the final text; to him I am exceedingly grateful.

The **Analysis** which follows is a list of the headings which I have inserted into the text. They have no weight other than my own scholarly judgment. They are intended to clarify Gregory's thought for the reader.

CE III.1

§§1–3 Eunomius' third challenge
§§4–21a The argument of Eunomius' preface is either redundant or unscriptural
§§21b–65 The meaning of 'created me' and other phrases in Proverbs 8
§§66–85 Eunomius inadvertently admits that begottenness is distinct from being
§§86–102 Eunomius' own arguments again support the truth
§§103–110 A rejoinder to Eunomius' taunt about ignorance
§§111–125 Is the title 'Son' metaphorical?
§§126–140 Metaphors and titles of the Only-begotten

CE III.2

§§1–15 Eunomius on the passionate aspects of begetting and birth
§§16–24 Passionless begetting in St John's Gospel
§§24–27 The pure childbearing of St Mary
§§28–38 Eunomius understands begetting in a way that equates Christ with creatures
§§39–42 Christ's nature superior to that of angels
§§43–57 Christ as Firstborn
§§58–61 The spiritual birth or begetting of believers
§§62–65 The work of creation might equally imply divine passibility
§§66–71 Eunomius seems to imply community of being in the work of creation
§§72–81 Eunomius contradicts himself on *gennema*
§§82–88a Eunomius contradicts himself on 'most authentic being'
§§88b–102 Eunomius fails to justify his first principles
§§103–110 On terms which imply relationship
§§111–122 Eunomius deliberately confuses begetting with creation
§§123–135 The uniqueness which Eunomius concedes to the Lord in fact applies to all creatures
§§136–150 Eunomius alleges 'variation' between Son and Father

§§151–155 Eunomius contradicts his earlier position by saying that the Son is uniquely begotten, and really means creation
§§156–165 Eunomius should simply deny Christ, and refrain from abuse of Basil

CE III.3

§§1–11 Created and uncreated being
§§12–25 The charge of Eunomius against Basil: 'Made Lord and Christ'
§§26–29 The charges summarized
§§30–40a The charge of being ashamed of the Cross
§§40b–46 The charge of insulting the saints
§§47–56a The allegation that Basil makes an already humiliated Christ the subject of the Lord's humiliation
56b–66 The allegation of teaching two Christs and two Lords
§§67–69 Humanity assumed by God

CE III.4

§§1–22 The charge of attributing Christ's saving work to a mere man
§§23–35a Some change is envisaged in the Incarnation, but not passibility
§§35b–52 The claim that Peter's term 'made' applies to the Lord's divine nature
§§53–64 Eunomius' interpretation of Peter refutes his own case

CE III.5

§§1–16a 'The Lord is the Spirit': Eunomius' interpretation and the true one
§§16b–38 Eunomius on names and beings, and his false attack on Basil
§§39–49 Eunomius and his strongest argument, from the names of elemental beings
§§50–60 Attributed names and essential being
§§61–64 Eunomius' view, that *ousia* is materialistic, is false

CE III.6

§§1–22 A dilemma proposed by the Eunomians, and the orthodox view
§§ 23–41 Begetting: Eunomius' argument, and the various meanings of the term

§§42–54 Eunomius confuses the begetting of the Son with material generative action
§§55–80 Basil defended against the argument from the eternity of creation

CE III.7

§§1–7a Eunomius' fine words about the supremacy of God
§§7b–14 The absurd notion that God controls his own power
§§15–24a Eunomius' evasion about why the Son's generation was deferred
§§24b–38a Eunomius' argument that generation ends as well as begins
§§38b–43 Temporal expressions are meaningless when time is not yet created
§§44–54 Eunomius' charge that Gregory makes the Son 'unbegotten'
§§55–64 The error of supposing that all that the Son is once did not exist

CE III.8

§§1–4 Eunomius' claim that knowledge of divine realities is possible
§§5–12 Eunomius' claim that Christ's titles indicate access to knowledge of the Father
§§13–23 Eunomius' claim that the mind seeks eternal life even before the Son existed
§§24–31 Sayings of Eunomius about conjunction and about the separation of the Father from begetting
§§32–42 Eunomius falsely alleges that the being of the Son is always qualified
§§43–58 By denying Christ's eternal lordship, Eunomius makes him a slave
§§59–64 Eunomius argues that the Son's being is a derivative honour

CE III.9

§§1–25 Eunomius on texts implying that the Lord rejected the title 'Good'
§§26–41 Biblical texts implying that Christ is an angel
§§42–46 Minor logical arguments about the Lord's generation
§§47–51 Eunomius' absurdities in conceding that Christ is Creator and God
§§52–53 Eunomius assimilates the Son's begetting and being to that of creatures
§§53b–64 Eunomius rejects the orthodox appeal to sacramental practice

CE III.10

§§1–17 The orthodox interpretation of the Lord's words to Mary Magdalene
§§18–25 Eunomius interprets the Son's Light as less than the Father's
§§26–34 Does the evidence indicate that the Son's Light is less than the Father's?
§§35–44 Eunomius argues that only the Father's Light is inapproachable
§§45–54 Eunomius' distinction of Light from Light supports orthodox theology

[p. 3] | # Gregory of Nyssa

Against Eunomius Book Three (*Translation*)

Part One

§§1–3 Eunomius' third challenge

1. 'For the athlete who competes in the regular way' (*2 Tim* 2.5) at the games, it is the rule that either the opponent refuses altogether to go on and voluntarily concedes victory to the winner, or else he is thrown three times in accordance with the rules of the competition, and thus on the verdict of the umpires the winner receives by triumphal proclamation the honour of a crown. So, since Eunomius, though twice overthrown in the previous books,[1] still does not concede victory to the truth over the lie, but yet again for the third time stirs up conflict against true religion with his book-writing, and exercises himself in his familiar gymnasium of the lie for his battles for falsehood, the word of truth must now again rise up through us to defeat the lie, the word which rests its hopes of winning upon the Giver of victory and Marshal of the games, and is at the same time encouraged by its opponent's poor wrestling technique.[2] **2.** We are not ashamed to confess that we have neither prepared a case sharpened with rhetoric for the combat, nor offered cunning dialectical logic-chopping to
[p. 4] help us against the opposition, something which for the inexperienced often | exposes even truth to the suspicion of falsehood. Rather, there is one power of the word in us against falsehood, first the true Word, who becomes the strength of our own word, and secondly the poor quality of the opposition, overthrown and collapsing of its own accord. **3.** In order best to make it clear to all that Eunomius' own work becomes for his opponents the means for his own overthrow, I will put forward to the reader the idol of his word (for so, I think, the word which diverges from the truth should be described); you must be honest judges of the fair conduct of the verbal competition, all of you who encounter our labours and watch the struggle our word has with its antagonist, so that by your just verdict the word of orthodoxy may be announced to the whole arena of the Church, as having won undisputed mastery over impiety in the eyes of all, graced with the unfading wreath of victors for three throws of its rival.

1 First by Basil, then by Gregory in his earlier books.

2 Some authorities understand this as, 'strengthened by the malice in its opponent's wrestling technique.' The sense adopted is explained however in what follows.

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§§4–21a The argument of Eunomius' preface is either redundant or unscriptural

4. Here then is the text which is set forward in the preface to the third book against the truth; it runs as follows:[3]

> Conserving the natural order, he says. and abiding by what is known from heaven,[4] because he is begotten, we do not refuse to call the Son an offspring,[5] since begotten being and the title "Son" possess such a relationship in their titles.

[p. 5] Now the | hearer should apply his mind carefully to this, that in calling the Only-begotten God both begotten and Son he refers the reason for these names to the natural order, and claims heavenly knowledge in evidence for this idea. So if anything in what follows is found to contradict these preliminaries, it will be clear to all that he has tripped himself up, confuted by his own words in advance of ours. **5.** The way however we should understand the argument expressed in his own words is this: he confesses that the title 'Son' in no way strictly fits the Only-begotten God, unless 'the natural order' (as he puts it) confirms the designation for him who was begotten. Therefore, if one removes the natural order from the title 'Son', it will be for nothing that he proclaims the name, since it is detached from its proper and natural meaning. Furthermore, to say that 'abiding by what is known from heaven' confirms these things, is much more a vindication of the orthodox understanding of the title 'Son', since the inspired teaching of the scriptures, which comes to us from heaven, confirms our argument about these things. **6.** Since then this is the case, and it is the infallible criterion of truth that these two things coincide with each other, the physical order, as he puts it, and the testimony of heavenly knowledge confirming the judgment of nature, it follows that saying anything against these is merely waging open war against the truth.

[p. 6] So our author, he who claims nature as the teacher of this name, and | says that he abides by heavenly things known to us by the teaching of the saints,—let us hear what he goes on to say shortly after what we have quoted. **7.** I shall for the moment pass over the things set out in the book which immediately

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3 Eunomius' words here appear again in §67, §119 and §139 below, with variations.

4 Literally, 'known from above,' that is, by divine revelation. So repeatedly throughout §§4–6.

5 The word γέννημα, here translated 'offspring', is from the same root γεννα- as the words for begetting/conceiving a child. It is applied to Christ by Eunomius in *Apol.* 12, to argue the junior status of the Son; he pairs it with ποίημα, 'thing made'. This use is discussed by Gregory in §§83–107 below.

follow the quotation, so that the contradiction of what is written may not be lost to view, obscured by the reading of what lies between.

> The same word, he says, will fit both where something made is concerned and something created, since the natural distinction and the relation of things to one another, and indeed the usage of the saints, provide us with absolute authority for the form of words. It would not therefore be wrong to associate closely the made with the maker, and the created with the creator.

8. Who is it he is calling 'something made' and 'something created', which has a natural relation to the maker and creator? If it is the things considered to be in the creation, visible and invisible, as Paul explains, when he says that 'in him all things were created, visible and invisible' (*Col* 1.16), so that this combination of relational words is correctly applied to itself, the made thing attached to the maker and the created to the creator,—if that is what he means, we too agree. In fact, since the Lord is maker of angels, the angel is certainly something made by its maker; and since the Lord is creator of the world, then obvi-
[p. 7] ously the world itself and all that is in it is called created. **9.** | If it is with these thoughts in mind that he distinguishes the order of nature, with reference to the verbal expression of mutual relationships arguing logically the closeness between the nouns called relational, then, since every one knows these things, it would surely be redundant to compile for us an argument in linguistic detail, without reference to doctrine. **10.** If however it is to the Only-begotten God that he applies such terms, so that he is called something made by the Maker, and a creature of the Creator, and if he claims the authority of the saints for this use of vocabulary, then he must first demonstrate in his argument which saints he says it was, who described the maker of all things as a thing made and a creature, and whom he follows in the bold use of this expression.

11. As saints the Church acknowledges those divinely inspired by the Spirit, patriarchs, lawgivers, prophets, evangelists and apostles. If there is any one among them who by his divinely inspired words taught that the God over all is a creature and a made thing, who sustains the universe by the word of his power (*Heb* 1.3), holding all beings in his grasp (cf. *Is* 40.12), and by his own mere will giving being to all, Eunomius may be pardoned for following the usage of the saints, as he puts it, in fashioning such a dogma. **12.** If however everybody has the right to know the divine scriptures, and there is nothing forbidden or secret to any who wishes to participate in divine instruction, why does he try to
[p. 8] mislead his hearers by his | false allegation against the scriptures, claiming the usage of the saints for the word 'creature' with reference to the Only-begotten?

That all things were made by him is what you hear from almost every holy voice, from Moses and the subsequent prophets and apostles, whom it would be a large task to present individually at this point. **13.** It is sufficient, among the others and above the others, to mention the sublime John, who in the prologue to his account of the divinity of the Only-begotten proclaims that there is nothing among things made which was not made by him (*Jn* 1.3), which is irrefutable and unambiguous proof that he is Lord of the universe and not to be classed among the creatures. If John asserts that all things that were made are from none other than him, and that nothing that exists by creation has come to be without him, who is there so mentally blind as not to see the truth in the proclamation of the Evangelist, that he who made the whole creation is surely something other than the creation? **14.** If everything that is counted among the things made exists through him, and he exists in the beginning, and is with God, being God and Word and Life and Light (*Jn* 1.1–3) and Stamp[6] and Radiance (*Heb* 1.3), and none of the things which exist by creation are given the same titles, neither Word nor God nor Life, not Light nor Truth, nor Stamp nor Radiance, and no other of the titles proper to God can be found applied to the creation, then plainly the one who is these things is by nature something other than creation, which is none of these things, nor is claimed to be.

[p. 9] **15.** If there were any use of such words common | to both creation and Maker, he might be forgiven for making the community of the rest of the titles a ground for the title 'creation' being shared by the created and the Maker; but if all their features, attributed by titles to the created and the uncreated natures, are not compatible and not shared, why is his audacious fraud not obvious to all, when he tries to fit the servile designation to the one, 'who rules,' as the prophet says, 'in his power for ever' (*Ps* 65/66.7), and 'who has primacy over all things,' as the Apostle says (*Col* 1.18), by using the title and idea of creation to put him into the same category as the servile nature? **16.** Paul declares that the whole creation is in servitude (*Rom* 8.21), and he was taught ineffable knowledge in schools above the heavens (2 *Cor* 12.2), learning these things there, where every significant word uttered in speech is useless, but inexpressible thought becomes the means of communicating teaching, instructing the purified heart through the unspoken illumination of thought. **17.** If therefore Paul cries out that the creation is in servitude, and that the Only-begotten God is truly Lord and God over all (*Rom* 9.5), and John testifies that the whole creation of things made is through him (*Jn* 1.3), how can one who is reckoned

6 In *Heb* 1.3 the word χαρακτήρ is used, which has the basic meaning of 'stamp', either the tool (like a signet), which makes a mark, or the mark or design in wax or other material made by the stamp. The meaning is that Christ replicates God.

any sort of Christian endure it, when he sees Eunomius using this incoherent
[p. 10] and inconsistent trick with words, | by a similarity of names with the servile, to reduce to the lowly status of creature that Power which transcends all rule and authority and sovereignty? **18.** If however he says he has some saints who have proclaimed him created, or made, or having a lowly and servile title, well, the scriptures are there: let him produce one such word, either he or someone else on his behalf, and we will shut up. **19.** But if no such expression exists, and no such idea is anywhere to be found in the scriptures held to be divinely inspired, which might advocate this impiety, what further need is there to fight about matters of general consent, against one who not only tells lies about the words of the saints, but battles against his own stipulations? **20.** For if the order of nature, as Eunomius himself affirms, attributes the title to the Son because he was begotten, and so the connexion of the term comes about through the relationship of Begotten to Begetter, why does he wrench the meaning of 'Son' from its natural affinity, and change the relationship to one of 'Made' and 'Maker'? The latter term applies in truth not only to the basic elements of the world, but if one were to use it also of a bumble-bee or an ant, inasmuch as each of them is a made thing, then similarly the reference of the term to the Maker would be just the same. **21.** The blasphemy of these words, among many others, is obvious; and the usage of the saints, which he claims to follow in saying these things, is plainly non-existent.

§§21b–65 The meaning of 'created me' and other phrases in Proverbs 8

[p. 11] However, that | passage from Proverbs may perhaps be quoted to us by them, which the advocates of the heresy constantly quote as proof that the Lord was created: 'The Lord created me a beginning of ways for his works' (*Prov* 8.22).[7] Because this saying is uttered by Wisdom, and the Lord is called Wisdom by great Paul (*1 Cor* 1.24), they advance this verse as meaning that the Only-begotten God himself, speaking as Wisdom, confesses that he was created by the Maker of all things. **22.** I think however that the orthodox meaning of this saying is clear to more attentive and careful persons, so that no harm should come to the doctrine of the faith for those who have studied the puzzles of the Proverbs. Nevertheless I think I should deal with the argument about this, so that with the meaning of this verse more clearly revealed, there be no scope for the claim of the heresy, that it is supported by the inspired scripture. **23.** It is generally agreed that in scriptural usage the word 'proverb' is not applied to the manifest meaning, but is used of some hidden sense. Thus the Gospel calls puzzling and obscure sayings 'proverbs', so that the proverb, if one considers a

7 Cf. Eunomius, *Apol.* 28, 20–24 (Vaggione 74).

rule to understand this word, is an expression which indicates through words, which literally mean one thing, another hidden meaning, or an expression which does not directly draw out the intention of the thought, but delivers its teaching obliquely by some indirect meaning. **24.** To this book in particular such
[p. 12] a name is attached as a title, and | the meaning of this designation is explained by wise Solomon straight away in the preface. He did not call the sayings in the book 'maxims' or 'counsels' or 'clear teaching', but 'proverbs', adding the explanation of what the meaning of this term portends: 'To learn wisdom,' he says, 'and instruction.' He does not, as is the usual practice in other disciplines, put instruction before wisdom, but urges one to become wise first through preliminary instruction, and thus advance afterwards to what the proverb teaches. There are, he says, 'words of prudence', which reveal their purpose 'by a turn' (*Prov* 1.3; cf. *Wisd* 8.8). **25.** What is not immediately intelligible needs a 'turn' for its secret to be grasped; just as Paul warned that he would 'change his voice', when he was about to go over to a metaphorical meaning (*Gal* 4.20), so here the manifestation of hidden things is called by Solomon a verbal 'turn'; as though the beauty of the thinking could not be understood unless one turned back again to see the hidden light shining from the thought. The same happens with the feathers which the peacock displays in its tail. **26.** If one sees the back of the feathers one would, because of the unattractive and plain appearance, certainly dismiss the spectacle as uninteresting; but if one turned it round and exposed its other side, one sees the varied artwork the species has, the semi-
[p. 13] circle | brilliant in the middle with purple tint, and the golden radiance round the edge alive and shining with many-coloured rainbows. Since therefore there is no beauty in the literal meaning of the term, ('All the glory,' as it says, 'of the king's daughter is on the inside' [*Ps* 44.14/45.13], lighting up the hidden beauty with golden thoughts) Solomon is bound to propose to the readers of this book the 'turn' of the argument, so that they may thereby 'understand parable and dark word, sayings of wise men, and riddles' (*Prov* 1.6).

27. Since these are the things which this proverbial instruction contains, a prudent person will accept nothing set out in this book without examination and interpretation, however clear and intelligible it may at first sight appear. For under even the things which seem obvious, there certainly lies the higher meaning. Yet if the obvious parts of this scripture of necessity require the most minute examination, how much more those, for which in their immediate sense there is much that is obscure and hard to interpret. **28.** Let us therefore examine the context of that passage, to see whether reading the nearby sentences offers any clarification. The text first presents Wisdom speaking some sentences in her own person (cf. *Prov* 8.12–21). The student of course knows what is said in this passage, where Wisdom dwells in counsel, and calls upon

knowledge and thought, and says she has strength and prudence in her possession, and that she is herself named Understanding, walks in paths of justice
[p. 14] and | goes about among paths of judgment; she says that through her rulers reign, monarchs prescribe justice, and tyrants control their territory. **29.** It is quite clear that the informed reader will not take any of these statements in their immediate sense. If it is by Wisdom that rulers come to power, and it is from her that tyranny gets its strength, then it must follow that Wisdom is presented to us as a tyrant-maker, and herself takes the blame for those who exercise sovereignty wickedly. **30.** Yet we do know kings who are really promoted by Wisdom to an endless reign: the poor in spirit, who obtain the kingdom of heaven, just as the Lord, who is Wisdom, announces in the Gospel (*Mt* 5.3). Such also are the rulers we recognize, who reign over the passions, who are not enslaved to the despotism of sin, who inscribe justice on their own life as on a tablet. **31.** In this way praiseworthy 'tyranny'[8] with the aid of Wisdom transforms the democracy[9] of the passions into the monarchy of reason, and subdues those elements which run loose into evil licence, I mean all bodily and earthly desires. 'For the flesh lusts against the spirit' (*Gal* 5.17), and rebels against government by the soul. This is the land which such a tyrant controls, and of which he was appointed governor by the Word at the first creation.[10]

[p. 15] | **32.** Therefore, just as it is agreed among all right-thinking people that these things are read with such an interpretation, rather than with that which appears immediately on the surface of the words, so it is reasonable that the passage which immediately follows this is not taken by right thinking people simply and without examination. **33.** 'If I speak to you,' it says, 'of what is done every day, I shall remind you to reckon up the things from eternity; the Lord created me' (*Prov* 8.21a–22).[11] What will the slave of the letter say, I ask, in response to this sentence, the one who attends in Jewish fashion to the mere

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8 In Greek τυραννίς and τύραννος did not always have the malignant sense, which 'tyranny' and 'tyrant' have in English, and Gregory here adopts the rarer good meaning for his purpose.

9 We preserve Gregory's reference to δημοκρατία, but note that he sees it as a term of abuse, implying disorderly mob-rule.

10 Jaeger's Latin footnote to 'first creation' says, 'that is, the spiritual creation as taught by Philo and the Platonists.' While that background is undeniable, it is important to note that, as in §29 above, Gregory is referring to *Prov* 8.16, 'By me dynasts control territory.' This means, according to Gregory, that Wisdom enables the soul to control the bodily passions, as was intended when God first made Man and gave him soul.

11 The verse numbered 8.21a in editions of the LXX is absent from the Hebrew Bible. Gregory takes it as a deliberate recommendation not to take the following words literally, but spiritually.

sound of syllables? Will not the combination seem grotesque in the hearing of the better-informed, 'If I speak to you of what happens every day, the Lord created me'?—as though, if he did not speak of what happens every day, it would follow that he altogether denies having been created; **34.** for he who says, 'If I speak, I was created,' silently implies, 'I was not created, if I do not speak.'[12] 'The Lord created me,' it says, 'a beginning of ways for his works. Before time he founded me in a beginning, before he made the earth, before he made the deeps, before the springs of waters came forth, before the mountains were established, before all hills he begets me' (*Prov* 8.22–25). What is this odd order of the construction of this creation? First it is created, afterwards founded, then begotten. 'The Lord made,' it says, 'lands and deserts and furthest inhabited
[p. 16] places under heaven' (*Prov* 8.26). **35.** What sort of Lord does it call the maker | of desert and inhabited land? Surely the one who also made Wisdom; for both this saying and that come from the same person, the one who says, 'The Lord created me,' and the one who adds, 'The Lord made lands and deserts.' The Lord therefore will be the Designer both of Wisdom herself and of inhabited and uninhabited land. **36.** What then becomes of, 'All things were made by the Son, and without him not one was made' (*Jn* 1.3)? If the same Lord both creates Wisdom, which we are advised to see as standing for the Son, and also every one of the things which creation includes, then how can sublime John be right to say that all things were made by him? This scripture contradicts the Gospel words, when it attributes the making of uninhabited and inhabited land to the one who created Wisdom.

37. It is the same too with all that follows. It tells of a throne of God set apart upon winds, and says that clouds above become strong, and the well-springs under heaven become safe; and the passage includes many such things, requiring a great deal of interpretation of what is stated, and that is arrived at by detailed and precise thinking. What is the throne set apart upon winds? What is the safety of the well-springs under heaven? How do the clouds above become strong? **38.** If one compares the text with what is observed, one will find considerable conflict between the facts and what is said. Every one knows
[p. 17] that the furthest places under heaven, because they are either too close to the | heat of the sun or too far away from it, through one extreme or the other are

12 For this argument Gregory omits the second clause of *Prov* 8.21a, and treats 'The Lord created me' as the apodosis to the conditional, 'If I speak . . . .' This can only be justified if he takes the second clause of *Prov* 8.21a, not as an apodosis (which it actually is), but as a further statement of the condition, as if it said, 'If I speak to you of what is done every day, [and if] I remind you to reckon up the things from eternity, [then] the Lord created me.' This is apparently how he understands it in §40 and §51.

uninhabitable, in the one case because they are immensely dry and burnt up, in the other because they are swollen with moisture and frozen solid, and that only the places equidistant from the opposite extremes are inhabited. **39.** But if it is the middle part of the earth that is shared by human beings, why does the proverb say that the furthest parts of the land under the heaven are inhabited? Or what strength could conceivably be attributed to the clouds, so as to justify the statement in the literal sense, when it says that the clouds become strong? Cloud is by nature a fine vapour spread through the air, which grows light because of its great subtlety, and disappears in the airy wind, then collapses in on itself and because of the compression falls through the supporting wind, becoming a heavy water-drop. **40.** What is the strength therefore in these, when they offer no resistance to any who would touch them? The subtlety and fluidity of the air is visible in cloud. Again, how is the divine throne of God set apart upon the unstable stuff of winds?—and to say that one is first created, finally born, and in between these, founded, what logic could one say there is in this, which fits the ordinary and literal meanings?—or in the previ-
[p. 18] ous | dilemma we considered, why speaking about what is done every day and the reminder to reckon up the things of eternity could become the reason for Wisdom being said to be created by God?

41. Therefore, since it has been clearly demonstrated in what we have said that none of these statements is of such a kind that the text can be taken without examination and interpretation, it would be right in the same way not to explain, 'The Lord created me,' in accordance with the meaning which comes immediately to us from the words, but to seek with all attention and diligence for the devout interpretation of what is said. **42.** However, to grasp correctly the meaning of the passage is for those alone, who by the Holy Spirit search the depths and are skilled at uttering in the Spirit the divine mysteries (cf. *1 Cor* 2.10; 14.2). For our part, we shall devote to this text enough attention not to leave altogether unobserved the meaning intended in the passage. What then is our argument? It is not possible, I believe, for the wisdom which arises in a person from divine enlightenment to come quite alone without the other gifts of the Spirit; rather, the gift of prophecy must surely also accompany it. **43.** If it is characteristic of wisdom to understand the truth of things, and if prophecy includes the prediction of the future, one could not have the complete gift of wisdom without also including the future in one's knowledge by the help of prophecy. Since Solomon claims for himself a wisdom beyond the human, when he says, 'God has taught me wisdom' (*Prov* 24.26/30.3), and his
[p. 19] whole work he also attributes to God, when he says, | 'My words are spoken by God' (*Prov* 24.69/31.1), it is right to look for prophecy combined with wisdom in this part of the *Proverbs*. **44.** We therefore claim that in his earlier words, when

he speaks of Wisdom building herself the house (*Prov* 9.1),[13] it is the building of the Lord's flesh that he hints at by his saying. It was not in someone else's building that the true Wisdom dwelt, but she constructed for herself a dwelling from the body of the Virgin. **45.** Here he puts forward in his argument what was united from both, from the house I mean and Wisdom who built the house, that is, from the Man and from the Deity combined with the Man, and to each he attributes appropriate and fitting sayings; this can be seen happening also in the Gospels, where the book, in telling its tale with due regard to the subject-matter, indicates the divine by a more elevated and God-befitting form of expression, and the human by the earth-bound and lowly. **46.** It is thus possible to see Solomon prophetically moved in this part too, and presenting the whole mystery of the Economy.[14] He speaks earlier of the pre-temporal power and activity of Wisdom, when in a way he agrees even verbally with the Evangelist. Just as John in comprehensive language proclaims him Cause and Designer of all things (*Jn* 1.3), so Solomon says that every single thing in the universe was made by him. **47.** He says, 'By Wisdom God laid the foundations
[p. 20] of the earth, by intelligence prepared the heavens' (*Prov* 3.19),[15] and | the things which subsequently follow from these and imply the same meaning; and so as not to appear to leave unmentioned the gift of virtue in human beings, once more in the person of Wisdom he goes through them in his speech, as I recorded a little earlier, 'I dwelt in counsel and knowledge and intelligence,' and whatever pertains to intellectual and scientific education (cf. *Prov* 8.12).

48. Having presented these and similar matters he brings in also the doctrine of the human Economy, why the Word became flesh (*Jn* 1.14). It is clear to every one that the God who is above all has in himself nothing created or acquired: not power, not wisdom, not light, not word, not life, not truth, nor any of the things envisaged in the fullness of the bosom of God, all of which are in fact the Only-begotten God, who is in the Father's bosom (*Jn* 1.18). Therefore to none of the things envisaged in God could the term 'creation' be reasonably applied, in such a way that the Son in the Father, or the Word in the Beginning, or the

13 If by 'earlier' Gregory means these words come before 'The Lord created me,' he has made a mistake. The reference may be to *Prov* 24, quoted just above.

14 Gregory, as is common among the Church Fathers, speaks of 'Economy' (*oikonomia*), to mean what modern writers often refer to as 'the Incarnation'.

15 I owe this reference to Ann Conway-Jones. Jaeger is wrong in referring here to *Prov* 8.23ff. The meaning of the latter passage is what is at issue. Gregory has established that what follows *Prov* 8.22 cannot be taken literally, and is now deducing that that verse itself refers to the economy of incarnation, not to the pre-existent divine Wisdom. He is arguing that *Proverbs* follows the same pattern as St John in moving from Creation (*Prov* 3.19) to human spiritual gifts (*Prov* 8.12), and thence to the creation of the Lord's humanity.

Light in Light, or the Life in Life, or the Wisdom in Wisdom might say, 'The Lord created me.' **49.** If the Wisdom of God is created, and Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God (*1 Cor* 1.24), then surely God possessed Wisdom as something acquired, obtaining something later by arrangement, which he had not at the first. Yet the one who is in the bosom of the Father never allows the paternal bosom to be thought empty of himself. So it is not as something external put into his bosom, but because he is the fullness of all goodness, that the one who is 'in the beginning' (*Jn* 1.1) is deemed to be always in the Father,
[p. 21] not waiting | to be generated in him by creation, so that the Father might not ever be deemed wanting in good things. Rather, the one deemed to be in the eternity of the Father's Godhead is for ever in him, being Power, Life, Truth, Light, Wisdom, and so on. **50.** Therefore the phrase, 'created me,' is not spoken by the one who is purely divine, but, as we have said, by the one combined in the Economy with our created nature.[16] How is it then that the same person both lays the foundation of the earth, prepares the heavens, and breaks open the deeps, being called Wisdom and Prudence and Divine Sense, and is then created for the beginning of works? Not, he says, without good reason is such an Economy included in the action. **51.** 'Rather, because human beings, after receiving orders about what was to be avoided, rejected the grace from their memory, becoming through disobedience forgetful of good things, for that reason, so that I may proclaim to you again what is done day by day for your welfare, I shall remind you by recounting the things from eternity, which you have forgotten.[17] I am not announcing to you a new Gospel, but working for your restoration to your original state; for this reason I was created, the one who for ever is, and needs no creative act in order to be, and I have thus become a beginning of ways for the works of God, I mean for human beings. Once the first way was destroyed, a new way had to be made for the wanderers, fresh and living (*Heb* 10,20): I myself, who am the Way' (*Jn* 14.6).

52. That the idea of 'created me' applies to the humanity is put very clearly
[p. 22] to us in his own words by the divine Apostle, when he urges, 'Put on | the Lord Jesus Christ' (*Rom* 13.14), and when he furthermore employs the same expression, 'Put on the new man which is created according to God' (*Eph* 4.24). If the garment of salvation is one, and that is Christ, one cannot say that the new man, who is created according to God, is any other than Christ, but plainly, he

16 This application of 'created me' to the Incarnation, rather than to the pre-temporal generation of the Son of God, was argued earlier by Marcellus of Ancyra (Fragments 9–16). *Eusebius Werke IV*, edd E. Klostermann/G. C. Hansen 2nd ed. 1972 (GCS *Eusebius* IV), 186f. So also Athanasius, e.g *Or c. ar.* II 51.3 (AW I 1.2, 227).

17 Based on *Prov* 8.21a; see nn. 11 and 12 above.

who has put on Christ, has put on the new man, who is created according to God. **53.** In truth only he can properly be called a 'new man', he who did not appear in human history in the familiar and customary ways of the human race, but his creation was distinct and singular, a novelty applying to him alone. That is why, with regard to the miracle of his birth, he calls the same person a 'new man created according to God', and with regard to the divine nature combined in the creation of this new man, names him Christ, as if the two expressions apply to one and the same, 'Christ', I mean, and 'the new man created according to God.' **54.** So, since Christ is Wisdom, let the intelligent reader study the account given by our opponents and our own, and let him decide which is more religious, which better preserves the thoughts befitting God in the text, the one which stipulates that the Creator and Lord of the universe was made, and argues that he is of like standing with the servile creation, or rather the one which looks to the Economy, and keeps intact what is due to the understanding of the divine and the human, where the doctrine is supported by the testimony of great Paul, who | sees createdness in the new man, [p. 23] but in the true Wisdom the power of creating.

55. The order of the text also agrees with the interpretation of the doctrine. If the beginning of the ways had not been created in us, no foundation would have been laid for expected future ages; nor would the Lord have become for us 'the Father of the future age', unless (as Isaiah puts it) 'to us a child was born, and his name was called' all the other titles the prophet gives him, and finally, 'Father of the future age' (*Is* 9.5 LXX). First therefore came the mystery of the Virginity and the Economy of the passion, and then the wise master-builders of faith laid down the foundation of the faith, and that means Christ (cf. *1 Cor* 3.10–11), the Father of the future age, on whom is built up the life of endless ages. **56.** When this had happened, in order that every believer might receive the divine purposes of the gospel law and the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit—all of which the divine scripture figuratively calls, by a kind of naturally fitting signification, mountains and hills, calling righteousness the mountains of God, and naming his judgments 'deeps', and 'earth' that which is sown by the Word and produces the plentiful harvest (*Mk* 4.8 par.), just as elsewhere we learn in David about peace by means of the mountains, righteousness by means of the hills (*Ps* 71/72.3)—it is necessary for Wisdom, the true Word, to be born among believers; for the one who is in those who have received him has not yet been born in unbelievers. So in order that these things may happen among us, the Designer of these things must be born in us.[18]

18 Marcellus of Ancyra (see n. 16 above) also spiritualizes *Prov* 8.24–25, but with quite different details, referring the passage to the mission of the Apostles (Fragments 22–27).

[p. 24] | **57.** We should understand the sequel to this passage in the same connexion. If Wisdom is born in us, then in each one the land and the desert are prepared by God. Land is what accepts the sowing and ploughing of the Word, and desert is the heart that admits evil residents. Thus our dwelling will be at the furthest parts of the earth (*Prov* 8.26). **58.** Some of the earth is deep, some shallow: so if one does not by downward thoughts become subterranean or cavernous, as is the life of those who live in their sins, stuck in the unstable slime at the bottom, for whom life really is a pit, as the Psalm says, 'Nor let the pit shut its mouth upon me' (*Ps* 68.16/69.15)—if then one, with Wisdom born in him, sets his mind on things above (*Col* 3.2), touching only so much earth as necessity requires, he it is who dwells in the furthest parts under heaven, not grovelling in earthly thinking, and with him Wisdom is present as he prepares heaven for himself instead of earth. **59.** He may make strong for himself the doctrine of the clouds above, by putting its instructions into practice, and by controlling the vast and spacious sea of evil by using strict behaviour as a shoreline, and he may stop the noxious fluid from coming out of his mouth.[19] He may contain it in water-springs, by the gift of doctrine safely pouring forth the stream of the Word, lest any should instead of pure water receive from it the drink of foul
[p. 25] potion (*Hab* 2.15), or he may rise above every earthly foothold, and | he may become airborne in his way of life, as he stands upon spiritual conduct, which the text calls 'winds', so that it is set apart as the throne of him that sits thereon. Paul was in the same way set apart for the Gospel, to become a chosen vessel so that he might bear the name of God (*Acts* 9.15), which in another passage becomes the throne which bears him who sits upon it. **60.** When these and like things have been achieved, so that the one who has in himself completed God's world now rejoices, rejoicing that he has become the parent, not of wild beasts and animals, but of human beings (*Prov* 8.31)—and these would be the godly thoughts, which are shaped in the divine image by faith in the one who has been created, born and founded in us; the foundation according to the saying of Paul means faith, by which Wisdom is born in believers, and all the things described take effect—then indeed truly blessed becomes the life of the one who has achieved this, as with him Wisdom is in continual harmony and joy, with him who daily takes delight in her alone. **61.** The Lord rejoices in his holy ones, and in heaven there is joy over those being saved, and the kind Father makes festival over his rescued son (cf. *Lk* 15.10, 23–24). Now that we have made these points briefly, let the industrious reader of the texts of divine scripture

19 As Gregory proceeds with his strained spiritual exegesis of the Greek text of *Prov* 8.23–31, he here uses a copy of the LXX which includes the first part of *Prov* 8.29, 'As he imposes his strictness on the sea, and waters shall not pass his mouth.'

fit the riddles to the interpretations, and test whether it is not much better to
[p. 26] reckon that the thought of the riddles points in this direction, rather than | suggesting the superficial sense. **62.** The theological language of John cannot be held to be true, when it celebrates the creation of all things by the Word, if in this place the one who created Wisdom were believed also to have made everything else with her. For the rest would no longer exist through her; rather she would be numbered with all the things made.

63. That this is the point of the enigmatic sentences is clearly apparent in the subsequent argument. It says, 'Now then, my son, listen to me' (*Prov* 8.32) and, 'Blessed is he who keeps my ways' (*Prov* 8.34), by 'ways' of course meaning the paths towards virtue, the beginning of which is the creation of wisdom. **64.** Who then, considering the divine scripture, will not conclude that the enemies of the truth are both wicked and fraudulent: wicked, in that, to the best of their ability, they remove the ineffable glory of the Only-begotten God and attach it to creation, as they strive to demonstrate that the Lord is one of the things made by him whose power over all things is unique; and fraudulent, because, when the scripture provides them with no basis for such ideas, they fortify their argument against true religion as if they were taking it from that source. **65.** Since therefore they cannot point to any word of any of the saints, which recommends us to class the pretemporal glory of the Only-begotten God among the subordinate creation, it would be proper, now that we have demonstrated this, for the victory over the lie to be ascribed to the case for true religion. They should set aside altogether these verbal devices of theirs, whereby they 'conform the created to the creator and the made to the maker,' and con-
[p. 27] fess, as the | Gospel from heaven teaches, a Beloved Son, neither bastard nor supposititious, and they should with the title of Son accept total natural affinity, and speak of him as true God who is from true God, and likewise believe about him all those things which are perceived in the Father; for they are one, and the one is observed in the other, neither exceeding nor falling short, and not changed or altered in any divine and good feature.

§§66–85 Eunomius inadvertently admits that begottenness is distinct from being

66. It has thus become clear that Eunomius is at war with himself, since he is convicted of self-contradiction. At one time he says that he ought to be called Son by nature because he has been begotten, at another, because he was created, he is no longer Son but 'made thing'. I think it therefore right that since, where two statements conflict with each other, it is not possible for truth to be found equally in both, the discreet and informed person following the argument should reject the impious and blasphemous, I mean words about

'created' and 'made', and attend only to the one which points to true religion, and confesses that the title 'Son' belongs naturally to the Only-Begotten God, so that the case for true religion may be sustained even through the words of its enemies. **67.** My words here repeat again the statement of his, which I quoted at the outset:

> The Son being begotten, he says, we also do not refuse to call him an offspring, since begotten being itself and the title "Son" possess such a relationship.[20]

[p. 28] In the first place the critical reader of these words should remember, that by | applying 'begotten being' to the Only-begotten he concedes as a consequence that 'not begotten being' applies to the Father; thus neither unbegottenness nor being begotten can be accepted in place of 'being', but 'being' is accepted distinctly, and distinctly it is understood to be begotten or not begotten because of the distinctive properties attributed to it.

68. But now we should try to understand in more detail what is said about this. He says that a being was begotten, and 'Son' is the name of the begotten being. In this however our argument refutes the contrary argument on two grounds. First, the attack is malicious; secondly, the attack on us is feeble. He is malicious in speaking of the begetting of a being, in order to argue the opposition of beings to each other, as they are divided by begottenness and unbegottenness into difference of nature; and he is convicted of feebleness in his attack by the same things which his malice argues. **69.** One who says that to have been begotten is the being, clearly distinguishes begetting as something other than being, so as not to make the connotation of begetting fit exactly with the idea of being. He has not in this present passage done what he often does in his arguments, and said that being begotten is being;[21] here he concedes that the being is begotten, as if the meaning of each term communicated to the hearer were distinct; the hearer gets one idea from 'was begotten', and
[p. 29] another from the word, 'being'. | Our argument might be made clearer by some examples. **70.** The Lord said in the Gospel that as childbirth approaches the woman suffers pain, but afterwards rejoices exceedingly, because a man has been born[22] into the world (*Jn* 16.21). Just as in this passage we learn from the

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20 See §4 above. Gregory makes changes here to the sentence-structure and wording.

21 Eunomius' claim that the very essence or being of God is his unbegottenness, and that of the Son to be begotten, is much discussed in *CE* I and II.

22 Here ἐγεννήθη is translated 'has been born', since the Greek root γεννα- is used both of the paternal act of begetting (regularly of God the Father and his begotten Son in Gregory and Eunomius) and of the mother's part in conception and birth.

Gospel of two distinct ideas, first the birth, which we perceive in the child-bearing, and secondly that which is produced by the child-bearing; the birth is not the man, but the man comes by birth. Similarly here too, when Eunomius acknowledges that the being is begotten, we learn from the predicate about coming from something, from the subject we perceive the reality itself, whose existence (ὑπόστασις) comes from that something. **71.** So if there is one thing that denotes the being, and another which the word for begetting invites us to understand, their clever devices have completely collapsed, like jars of pottery dashed against each other and broken by each other. It will no longer be possible for them to transfer the distinction between begotten and unbegotten to the being of the Father and the Son, and to make the same transfer of mutually contradictory terms to the realities. **72.** Since it is conceded by Eunomius that the being was begotten, just as this sort of idea is explained in the example from the Gospel, in which we learn that the man was born, yet we do not identify the man with the child-bearing, but accept the proper meaning of each word, then surely the heresy will have no standing left, when it argues the difference between the beings from the use of such words.

73. To make sure that our argument on these issues is as clear as possible,
[p. 30] we shall deal with the subject again as follows. | The one who constructed the universe made the human race at the beginning along with everything else, and after Adam was made, he then established the principle of generating offspring[23] from each other, when he said, 'Increase and multiply' (*Gen* 1.28). When Abel came into existence by being begotten, would not the person of sense say that, in accordance with the principle of human begetting, Adam had come to exist unbegotten? **74.** Indeed, the first man had within himself the whole defining character of human nature, and the one begotten by him is likewise classed under the same definition of his essential being. If begotten being were represented as something other than the being which was not begotten, the same definition of their being would not fit both. Where the being of things differs, the definition of their being is not the same either. Since therefore the being of both Adam and Abel is marked by the same characteristics, we are bound to conclude that one essential being is in both, and that each name designates one with the same nature. **75.** The two, Adam and Abel, are one in the definition of their nature, but in the personal characteristics attributed to each the distinction between them is not ambiguous. It is therefore incorrect to say that Adam begot an essential being different from his own; rather, he begot from himself another self, in whom was born simultaneously all that defined the being of the one who did the begetting. **76.** What we have learned then about human nature, following the guidance indicated by the

23 'Generating offspring' translates γέννησις, which we usually render 'begetting'.

logic of definition, we should, I believe, also take as our guide to the unsullied understanding of the divine doctrines. If we remove every fleshly and material
[p. 31] notion from the divine and sublime teachings, | we shall have, in the thought that remains, when it is purified of such elements, the surest possible guide to sublime and unapproachable things.

77. Even our opponents agree that the God over all is the Father of the Only-begotten in fact and in name. They also refer to the Only-begotten God, who is from the Father, as 'begotten', because he originated by begetting. Since therefore among human beings the title 'father' has linked with it certain meanings which are alien to the unsullied Nature, it is right to leave behind all those material thoughts which arise together with the fleshly term 'father', and to frame an understanding appropriate to God, which indicates only what genuinely applies to the God and Father. 78. Not only are there fleshly implications involved in the thought of a human father, but a certain temporal distinction surely applies to the thought of human paternity. Consequently, in the case of the divine begetting, it would be as well, along with the pollution of the flesh, to reject also the temporal distinction. Thus, with every material feature expunged, the transcendent begetting will be pure not only of all liability to passion, but also of any temporal notion. 79. Hence to call God 'Father' is to embrace, along with the idea that God is, the idea of what he is. That which has its being from some beginning, must surely also have from somewhere a beginning of what it is; where something has no beginning of being, anything else attributed to it will also have no point at which it began. God is indeed Father. Therefore he is what he is from eternity: he did not become, but is, Father; for with God, what he was, he both is and will be. 80. If there were something he once was not, then he is not that and never will be: He is not held in faith to be Father of any thing such that it would be good religion to say that God
[p. 32] ever exists by himself without it. | The Father is Father of Life, of Truth and Wisdom, of Light, Sanctification and and Power, and of all those things which the Only-begotten is in reality and name. So when it is argued by our opponents that Light once did not exist, I do not know which is the greater loss, to the Light, when he was not Light, or to the Possessor, when he does not possess Light. 81. Similarly with Life, Truth, Power and the rest, everything that fills the Father's bosom (cf. *Jn* 1.18), the Only-begotten God is all of them in his own fullness, <being all of them in the Father>.[24] The absurdity is as great on either side, and the blasphemy against the Son is equalled by the impiety towards

24 The grammar does not work in Greek, and Jaeger marks a lacuna in the middle of the sentence. I have supposed the lacuna to stand later in the sentence, and have filled it conjecturally so: . . .τὰ πάντα ἐστί, ἐν τῷ πατρὶ τὰ πάντα ὤν.

the Father. When you say that the Lord once was not, you will not merely be conceding that Power did not exist, but you will be saying that the power of God did not exist, him who is the Father of the Power. **82.** So the argument you put forward that the Son once did not exist proves nothing less than that the Father is void of every good. See to what depth the precise argumentation of the wise leads! How true in these respects is the saying of the Lord, which says, 'He that rejects me rejects the one that sent me' (*Jn* 12.48)! By the same means by which they reject the existence at one time of the Only-begotten, they also dishonour the Father, by their argument robbing the Father's glory of every good title and concept.

83. The flimsiness of the malicious effort of our scribbler is therefore exposed by what has been said: in trying to argue a contradiction between the essential being of the Only-begotten and that of the Father from the fact that one is called 'begotten' and the other 'unbegotten', he is convicted of wasting
[p. 33] his time on incoherencies. **84.** It was proved from his own words, first that | the word for being is one thing, the word for begetting another, and secondly that no new being, different from that of the Father, came into existence in the Son, but that what the Father is in the definition of his nature, is also what the one who comes from him is; there is no change of nature into something else in the existence (ὑπόστασις) of the Son, as we have earlier demonstrated to be true by our discussion on the subject of Abel and Adam. **85.** In that case the one who had not been begotten in the same way was the same in the definition of his being as the one who had been begotten, and the begetting of Abel made no difference to his nature; so too where the unsullied doctrines are concerned, the Only-begotten God did not in any way, by being himself begotten, vary in himself the essential being of the one who was not begotten, having come forth from the Father and being in the Father, as the Gospel says (*Jn* 8.42 etc.; 10.38 etc.), but is, in accordance with the simple and specific definition of our faith, 'Light from Light, true God from true God,'[25] the one being all that the other is, except for actually being him.[26]

§§86–102 Eunomius' own arguments again support the truth

86. Eunomius' purpose in constructing this argumentation is not something I think we should discuss at present, whether it is rash and risky, or whether it is permitted and safe to change from one grammatical form to another the terms applied to the divine nature, and to call the one who was begotten (γεννηθέντα)

25 Apparently quoting the Nicene Creed. These two phrases follow each other both in the original version of Nicaea 325 and in that of Constantinople 381.

26 The paragraph break is placed a section later at §87 by Jaeger (following *PG*).

an 'offspring' (γέννημα). **87.** I pass over this topic, lest our argument, by becoming involved more than it ought with controversy over smaller points, fail to address the larger. But this, I say, we must carefully consider, whether relationship of nature is included together with the use of the names. He says of
[p. 34] course, that what is proper to the essential being | is included together with the affinity of the titles: he would not say that the mere names in themselves, apart from the meaning of what they indicate, have any relation and affinity to each other; it is in the meanings which the words convey that we discern affinity and estrangement between words. **88.** If therefore he concedes that the Son has a natural relationship with the Father, we should set aside the titles and consider the meaning of the things signified, whether estrangement of being is implied by the affinity, or close and personal relationship. To say it is estrangement would however be manifest lunacy. How could one preserve the connexion and affinity in the names through things alien and having nothing in common?—as he says himself, 'The being itself which has been begotten, and the title of "Son", possessing such a relationship of names.' **89.** Yet if he says that the affinity is what these titles indicate, he will perforce be revealed as advocating the view that the sharing of being follows from the affinity of the names, and without knowing it, he argues that it indicates the connectedness of the Subjects, and does so frequently in his published work. The means by which he tries to subvert the truth are also those by which he is often unwillingly dragged into advocating his opponents' doctrines. **90.** We hear something similar of Saul in the story, that when stirred with wrath against those who were prophesying, he was overcome by the spiritual gift and became one of the divinely inspired, the divine Spirit intending, I think, to use the apostate to punish himself; whence the unexpectedness of the event passed into proverb in later times, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' (*1 Sam* [*1 Reg*] 10.10–11).
[p. 35] | **91.** Where then does Eunomius support the truth? It is when he says,

> The Lord himself being Son of the Living God, not being ashamed of his birth from the Virgin, often in his own sayings called himself "Son of Man".

This statement we also offer in order to demonstrate the shared nature, for the word 'Son' in both cases equally points to the sharing of nature. **92.** Just as he is called Son of Man because of the consanguinity of his flesh with that of her from whom he was born, so also surely he is reckoned Son of God because of the bond between his essential being and that from which he derived his existence. The following saying is also a very great weapon for the truth. 'The Mediator of God and men', as the great Apostle calls him (*1 Tim* 2.5), has not the same meaning as the title 'Son', since it balances equally the two natures,

the divine and the human. The same one both is Son of God and became Son of Man by economy,[27] so that by his own sharing in each he might join together elements distinct in nature. **93.** If it were the case that in becoming Son of Man he did not participate in human nature, it would follow that in being Son of God he does not share in the divine being. If however the whole human compound was in him, for 'he was tempted in all points similarly, without sin' (*Heb* 4.15), we are absolutely obliged to believe that every characteristic of the transcendent Being is in him, the word 'Son' affirming of him both things at once, the human in 'Man', the divine in 'God'.

[p. 36] | **94.** If then, as Eunomius says, the titles indicate the affinity, and the affinity is observed in the realities and not in mere verbal expressions (by 'realities' I mean things considered in themselves, if it is not rash to speak in this way of the Son and the Father), who could deny that the Captain of the Blasphemy himself has been drawn unconsciously into the defence of true religion, by his own words refuting his own arguments, and proclaiming shared being as among the divine doctrines? **95.** The word on behalf of the truth, which he throws in unintentionally about this, is not false, namely that he would not have been called Son, if the natural meaning of words had not confirmed the truth of the term. A structure is not called the 'son' of the constructor, nor would any sane man say that the builder 'fathered' the house; nor do we refer to the vine as the vinedresser's 'offspring', but we call the building the man's 'work', and the one begotten by him the man's 'son', in order, I suppose, that what matches in the objects may be indicated through the names. In the same way, when we learn of the only-begotten Son of God, we do not by this term understand 'creature of God', but rather what the word 'Son' really indicates by its connotation. **96.** If wine is also called by Scripture, 'offspring of vine',[28] even so the phrase should not on the basis of the use of this same word impair the doctrines of true religion. We do not call wine 'offspring' of the oak, nor the acorn that of the vine, but only where there is a sharing of nature between the offspring and what it comes from. **97.** The sap in the vine, as it is drawn up through the rooted stock by the pith, is in its elementary power water, but by

27 οἰκονομία, 'economy', means an arrangement, disposal or dispensation, and is used especially of God's actions towards mankind, of which the Incarnation is the chief.

28 γέννημα = 'a thing begotten or born', here rendered 'offspring', is in ancient texts often confused with γένημα, which comes from a different verbal stem and means 'something brought into existence, made', and is especially used of vegetable produce. The meanings as well as the spelling may be confused. One form or the other is often applied to the 'fruit' of the earth in the Greek Bible. Rarer is 'γέννημα of vine', quoted here: Jaeger cites *Dt* 22.9, but *Is* 32.12 is a nearer example. In fact Gregory probably has in mind Jesus' reference to the 'fruit of the vine' in *Mt* 26.29, *Mk* 14.25, *Lk* 22.18, where modern NT texts read γένημα.

[p. 37] some process, as it follows the ways appointed by nature and | rises from the lower parts to the upper, it takes on the quality of wine, the sunlight also making a contribution, as by its heat it draws up the moisture from the bottom to the bud, and by proper and suitable ripening turns the liquid into wine. Thus there is no variation of nature between the moisture which resides in the vine and the wine produced from[29] it. **98.** The one moist substance derives from the other, and no one would say that there is any other cause of the moisture of wine than the sap naturally residing in the vine. The differences of qualities introduce no change as far as the moisture is concerned; rather, it is because some particular quality distinguishes the liquid in the wine from the moisture in the vine, bitterness or sweetness accompanying each of them,[30] so that they are the same in substance, while they change in their various qualities.

99. Therefore, just as when we hear the Only-begotten God called 'Son of Man' by the Scripture, we have learned from the use of the term that it belongs to the true Man, so, although the Son may be as our opponents argue an 'offspring' (γέννημα), no less do we learn from this his affinity of essential being with the one who begot him; for although the wine also is called 'offspring (γέννημα) of the vine', it proves to be no different where moisture is concerned from the natural element residing in the vine. **100.** If one soundly inspects the things said by our adversaries, they point to our own doctrine, and the sense contradicts their own arguments, as they everywhere endeavour to argue for
[p. 38] difference of essential being. Yet it | is quite a problem to guess how they came to such conclusions. **101.** If the title 'Son' does not signify merely that he has a source, but specifically suggests by its meaning a natural affinity, as Eunomius says, and if wine is not called 'offspring of oak', and if 'offspring of vipers' are, as the Gospel says (*Mt* 23.33), snakes and not sheep, then clearly also the terms 'Son' and 'begotten' applied to the Only-begotten do not imply an affinity with something of another kind. **102.** But if, as our opponents argue, he is called 'offspring', and the title 'Son' accords with his nature, as they confess, then surely he is Son of the essential being of his Begetter, not from some other thing conceived as outside his nature. If he truly is from thence, he is surely not alienated from his source, as has been shown in the other cases, where every thing that arises begotten from something else is indeed of the same kind as that from which it originated.

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29 ἀπογεννώμενον can also mean 'born from' or 'begotten from'.

30 This follows the emendation suggested by Jaeger in his *apparatus*. The order of words in the mss. makes no sense: '. . . because some particular quality distinguishes the liquid in the wine from the sweetness in the vine, bitterness or moisture accompanying each of them.'

§§103–110 A rejoinder to Eunomius' taunt about ignorance

103. If one demands any interpretation, outline or explanation of the divine being, we shall not deny that we are ignorant of such wisdom, affirming only this, that it is not possible to grasp what is in its nature infinite by any verbal concept. Prophecy proclaims that the divine majesty has no limit, expressly proclaiming that, 'of the magnificence of the glory of his holiness . . . there is no end' (*Ps* 144/145.3,5). **104.** If the things about him are endless, much more he himself in his being, whatever that actually is, is in no part grasped by any definition. If then interpretation in nouns and verbs somehow grasps the object
[p. 39] in its meaning, and it is not possible for the infinite to be comprehended, | no one will reasonably accuse us of ignorance, if we do not rashly attempt the impossible. For by what name shall I grasp the incomprehensible? With what word am I to announce the inexpressible? **105.** Since the Divinity is greater and higher than names can signify, we have learned to honour by silence things above word and thought; and though the one who thinks higher than he ought to think (cf. *Rom* 12.3) disparages this caution in our thinking, making mockery of our ignorance of the incomprehensible,[31] and though he knows the difference made by the dissimilarity between the formless, unbounded, immeasurable and innumerable—the Father, I mean, and the Son and the Holy Spirit—, and puts forward to convict us of ignorance the text, 'You worship you know not what' (*Jn* 4.12), if we do not know the essential being of what we worship, **106.** then we shall follow the prophet's advice (*Is* 51.7), and not be scared of the taunt of fools, nor because of their contempt speak rashly of the ineffable. We take as our instructor in the mysteries beyond knowledge him of the untrained mind, Paul: he is so far from thinking that the divine nature is within human comprehension, that he calls the judgments of God unsearchable and his ways past finding out, and affirms that what is promised to those who love him for their achievements in this life surpasses understanding, so that it is impossible to accept it with the eye, or receive it in the ear, or make room for it in the heart (*Rom* 11.33). **107.** Learning this from Paul, we confidently declare that not only are the judgments of God above the power of those who try to investigate them,
[p. 40] but that the paths of knowledge also remain to | this day untrodden and inaccessible. It was this, we suppose, the Apostle intended to indicate when he said that the ways which lead to the incomprehensible are 'past finding out', meaning by this expression that this knowledge is inaccessible to human thinking, and that none has yet set his mind upon such an intellectual journey, or indicated any trace or sign of an approach to apprehending the incomprehensible.

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31 Jaeger compares the charge made by Eunomius, quoted below at the opening of III.8.

108. Having learnt these things from the loud proclamation of the Apostle, we deduce from his words that, if his judgments cannot be searched out, and his ways are inaccessible, and his promise of good things exceeds all speculative imagination, how much greater is the measure by which the Deity himself is, because he is ineffable and unapproachable, higher still and superior to the concepts we have of things about him, of which the divinely taught Paul asserts we have no knowledge.[32] For this reason we affirm in our own selves the ridiculed doctrine, confessing ourselves not up to the knowledge which exceeds knowledge, and we say that we truly worship what we know. **109.** We know the height of the glory of what we worship, deducing the unimaginable greatness from our very inability to grasp it in our thoughts. The word spoken by the Lord to the Samaritan woman, and used as a weapon against us by our enemies, might be more accurately said of them. 'You worship what you do not know,' says the Lord to the Samaritan woman (*Jn* 4.22), who in her views
[p. 41] about God was prejudiced by corporeal ideas: | the account rightly criticizes her, because the Samaritans, thinking they worshipped God and then believing that the Divinity resided physically in a place (cf. *Jn* 4.20), were only nominally devout, since they worshipped something else, and not God. **110.** Nothing with prescribed limits is divine; rather, it is characteristic of deity to be everywhere, to penetrate all things, and to be enclosed by nothing. So the text thrown at us recoils on the enemies of Christ, and accuses them. The Samaritans, thinking that the Divinity was contained in some local limits, were rebuked by the words they heard: 'You worship what you do not know, and the worship directed at God becomes unprofitable for you, for a god who is held to reside in a particular place is not God.' In just the same way, it might properly be said also to the modern Samaritans, that 'by the word "unbegottenness" you propose to restrict the divine being to a sort of locality, and thus worship what you do not know, paying devotion as if to God, but ignorant that the infinity of God surpasses every verbal connotation and definition.'

§§111–125 Is the title 'Son' metaphorical?

111. The argument however has gone beyond what was intended, by following the continual sequence of conclusions. We ought therefore to return to the original order, since I think that in what has been said his original statement has been sufficiently shown to be not only at variance with the truth, but with itself. **112.** If, as they say, the natural relationship to the Father is affirmed by the title 'Son', and the relationship to the Begetter by that of 'offspring' (γέννημα),

32 This complicated sentence means: Paul says we cannot understand the judgments, ways, and promises of God; God in himself must be even more inaccessible.

(as by some schoolman's nonsense their philosophy distorts the words which
[p. 42] indicate the divine nature into a pattern of titles), then undoubtedly the | relationship of the names to each other established from nature becomes a proof of their affinity, or rather identity. **113.** But let my argument take up the voice of the opposition, so that the doctrine of true religion may not appear merely to prevail through the feebleness of its foes, but very much to have power in itself. As far as possible, let the opposing argument be supported by our own most strenuous advocacy, so that the superiority of strength can be ascertained with full conviction, and we may ourselves put forward matters overlooked by our opponents as a rigorous test of truth.

The supporter of our opponents might say that the titles 'son' and 'offspring' do not necessarily connote affinity of nature. **114.** Indeed, scripture speaks of a 'child of wrath', a 'son of destruction' and an 'offspring of viper' (*Eph* 2.3; *Jn* 17.12; *Mt* 3.7), and of course no common nature is implied by such terms. Judas, who is called 'son of destruction',[33] is not the same substance, as what destruction itself means. The man Judas has one meaning, destruction another. **115.** The argument reaches an equivalent conclusion on the other side, too. Some are called 'sons of light' and 'sons of day' (*Jn* 12.36; 1 *Thes* 5.5), but they are not the same as the light and the day as defined by their nature. Stones become 'children of Abraham' (*Mt* 3.9), when by faith and works they acquire for themselves a kinship with him. Those who are led by the Spirit of God, as the Apostle says (*Rom* 8.14), are called 'sons of God', not being the same in nature
[p. 43] as God. Many similar examples | can be collected from the divinely inspired scripture, whereby fraud, coloured like a picture with scriptural quotation, can portray an image of the truth.

116. What then are we to say to this? Divine scripture can use the word 'son' for two ideas, so that for some it is by nature, for others such a title is got by construction or acquisition. When it speaks of 'sons of men' or 'sons of rams' (*Ps* 28.1 LXX), it does indeed imply the essential relation between what is begotten and that from which it derived; but when it speaks of 'sons of power' or 'children of God' (*1 Sam* [*1 Reg*] 14.52; *1 Jn* 3.2 etc.), it refers to the kinship arising from free choice. **117.** Yet again, in the negative sense, the same are called both 'sons of Eli' and 'pestilent sons' (*1 Reg* 2.12 LXX): by being called sons of Eli their natural kinship with him is attested, while by being named 'pestilent' they are condemned for their wilful viciousness, as not imitating their father's way of

33 'Son of destruction' is not applied to Judas in the *NT*, but is a description of the 'man of wickedness' who is to be manifested before the glorious coming of Christ according to *2 Thes* 2.3. The application to Judas may have slipped over from *Ps* 88.23/89.22, where the 'son of wickedness' will not be able to harm God's Anointed.

life, but making their free will akin to evil. **118.** Where the lower order of nature is concerned, then, and our actions, since humanity can incline either way, I mean to vice or virtue, it is possible for us to become sons either of night or of day, while our nature remains in its principal part within its own defined limits. Neither is the one who becomes a child of wrath parted from his human begetting, nor does the one who deliberately associates himself with goodness
[p. 44] | repudiate his human birth by the refinement of his habits, but with his nature remaining the same in both cases, the differences arising from moral choices take on the titles of what they are akin to, becoming either children of God through virtue or of the Adversary through vice.

119. Where doctrines about the Divinity are concerned, Eunomius (to use the writer's own words),[34]

> 'conserves the natural order and abides by what is known from heaven, that, since he was begotten, I do not refuse to call him an offspring, because begotten being,' (as he puts it,) 'and the title "Son" possess such a relationship in their titles.'

Why then does he separate from essential kinship that which is begotten from the begetter? **120.** In the case of those called 'sons' or 'offspring' in a derogatory way, or of those for whom some praise attaches by such titles, one cannot say that any one is called 'child of wrath' because he really has received his birth from wrath, nor on the other hand that any one physically has day as his mother, and is therefore her son; it is rather the difference of moral choices which causes terms of such consanguinity to be used. Here however Eunomius says, 'Since the Son is begotten, I do not refuse to speak of him as an offspring, because,' he says, 'the begotten being itself and the title Son possess such a relationship in their titles.' **121.** If then it is because the Son really is an offspring that he affirms that he possesses such a relationship in titles, what room is there to apply such an account of names both to those who have them by imprecise metaphor, and to those whose natural relationship (as Eunomius
[p. 45] claims) | properly possesses such nomenclature?[35] This sort of argument applies therefore only to those whose nature is on the border between virtue and vice, where one might often change between the contrary titles, becoming the child now of light, now of darkness, depending on his tendency to good or

34 See §4 for Gregory's use of this quotation.

35 This tangled sentence seems to mean: if he insists that the titles of Son and Offspring are literal, that implies divine consubstantiality, and Eunomius cannot evade this implication by appealing to biblical metaphors like 'son or wrath' and 'children of day'.

its opposite. **122.** Where there is no room for opposition, it cannot be said that the title Son is applied metaphorically, on the analogy of those who obtain the title through free choice. No one would go so far as to claim that, just as a man may set aside the works of darkness and become, because of his virtuous life, a child of light, so the Only-begotten God, by rejecting evil chooses in preference what is more honourable. **123.** A human being becomes a son of God by being joined to Christ through spiritual birth; the one however who through himself makes the human being into a son of God does not himself need another son to bestow adoption on him, but gets his name from what he is by nature. A man changes himself, exchanging old for new; but God, what will he change into, so as to acquire what he has not? **124.** A human being discards the self he is and clothes himself in the divine nature; he who is ever the same, what does he take off and put on? A human being becomes a son of God by acquiring what he has not and discarding what he has; he who has never been in any evil state has nothing he can receive or forsake. Again, a human being can be called someone's son either truly, when one speaks with an eye to nature, or else metaphorically, when his chosen behaviour wins the name. **125.** God however, being
[p. 46] a single Good with his single and uncompounded nature, | looks perpetually to the same goal and never changes in response to impulses of choice; rather, he always both wills what he is and, of course, is what he wills, so that in both ways he is properly and truly called Son of God: both because his nature has goodness in itself, and because his purpose has never fallen short of the best, so that he might be given this designation by some metaphorical usage. There is thus no scope for those arguments, which we put forward on behalf of those opposed to us, to be used by our opponents to contradict the affinity of nature.

§§126–140 Metaphors and titles of the Only-begotten

126. I know not how or why, but hating and evading the truth, they give him the title of Son, but, in order that community of being may not be inferred from this word, they separate the word from the meaning inherent in the title, and leave the Only-begotten with the title 'Son' empty and meaningless, allowing him only the sound of the word. That I speak the truth and am not misrepresenting the aim of my adversaries can be clearly perceived in their own attacks upon the truth. **127.** The sort of thing which is offered by them as argument for their blasphemy is this:

> We learn many names for the Only-begotten from the divine writings: Stone, Axe, Rock, Foundation, Bread, Vine, Door, Way, Shepherd, Well-spring, Wood, Resurrection, Teacher, Light and many others. It is not devoutly correct to take any of these in its literal sense when we think

of the Lord. **128.** It would indeed be quite absurd to think that the incorporeal and immaterial, the single and formless, changes its shape into
[p. 47] the meanings implied by some of these names, so that | we think when we hear "Axe" of that sort of iron shape, or when we hear "Light", of daylight, or when we hear "Vine", of what comes from planting vineyards, nor to any of the others do we apply the meaning suggested by habit. Rather, we transpose the meanings of those words to something more appropriate to God and think of something else: though we call him by those names, it is not as though he is any of them in the definition of his nature, but while he is called these things, something else is understood by the words used. **129.** If names of this kind are both truly applied to the Only-begotten God, and do not comprise the statement of his nature, it follows, they continue, that we should not carry over the meaning of "Son" as generally prevalent to the interpretation of his nature either, but find some meaning for this word too, which is different from the commonplace and literal one.[36]

They use these and similar philosophical arguments, in order to prove that the Son is not what he is, and is called. **130.** Our writing however was going in another direction: to prove that the new composition by Eunomius is false and inconsistent, agreeing neither with the truth nor with itself. Nevertheless, since in order to condemn their teaching a kind of advocacy of their blasphemy was introduced into the argument, it might be right to deal briefly with this, and then return to the argument in the text.[37]

131. What can be said to this kind of thing, without missing the point? Since, as they say, there are many titles, which are attributed to the Only-begotten by Scripture, none of the others, we say, is closely connected to his relation with the one who begot him. Unlike 'Son of the Father', when we say 'Stone,' or
[p. 48] 'Resurrection,' or 'Shepherd,' or 'Light,' or any of the other | names, we do not refer back to the God of the Universe, but it is possible to apply a kind of scien-

36 The argument in §§127–129 is presented by Jaeger as a quotation. It is better regarded as Gregory's own representation of the Eunomian case as promised in §113.

37 *NPNF* V (p. 129f.) translates 'Since, however, the arguments which we employ to attack their doctrine are brought into the discussion as a sort of support for their blasphemy . . .' and comments, 'The meaning of this seems to be that the Anomoean party make the same charge of "inconsistency" against the orthodox . . . .' The reference appears in fact to be to Gregory's own adoption of the role of advocate for the Eunomians (§113 onwards), to which the preceding note refers.

tific rule to sort out the meanings of the divine names. **132.** Some of them indicate his exalted and ineffable glory, others show the variety of his providential care; so that if (hypothetically speaking) there were no beneficiary, those words would not be applied to him, which describe his beneficence. Those names which express what is proper to God, are properly and correctly applicable to the Only-begotten God, even without reference to his governance. In order that a view of this kind may be explained as lucidly as possible, we shall think about the names themselves. **133.** The Lord would not be called a Vine, if it were not for the growth of those whose root is in him; nor Shepherd, if the sheep of the house of Israel were not lost; nor Physician, if it were not for the sick; nor would he have received the rest of his titles, if it were not by making the names his own through some providential action favouring the beneficiaries. What need is there to go into detail and prolong the discussion with matters of common consent? 'Son,' however, 'Right hand,' 'Only-begotten', 'Word (λόγος),' 'Wisdom,' 'Power,' and all such titles as indicate a relationship, are surely all used with simultaneous reference to some relational bond with the Father. **134.** He is called '*God's* Power,' '*God's* Right hand,' and '*God's* Wisdom,' '*the Father's* Son and Only-begotten,' and 'Word *with God*,' and so forth. It follows from the argument that we should envisage a meaning for each of the titles fitting and appropriate to its Subject, so that we do not go wrong in our account of religion by missing the correct meaning.

135. Therefore, just as in using each of the other titles metaphorically as befitting God we reject the literal understanding of them, | so that we are [p. 49] not naming physical light or a trampled roadway or a lifeless stone or farm-produced bread or the spoken word, but rather those things which express the majesty of the power of God, so also if any one rejects the normal and natural meaning of 'Son,' by which we learn that he is from the being of his Begetter, he will surely be moving the title metaphorically to a yet higher meaning. Because the metaphorical change to the more glorious sense of each of the others was fitting for the expression of the divine power, it surely follows that the meaning of this title too should be metaphorically transposed to something more exalted. **136.** What then would be the more divinely appropriate understanding of the designation 'Son', if the natural relation to the one who begot him is, as our adversaries argue, rejected? No one, presumably, would be so bold in his impiety, as to think that in speaking of the divine nature the lowly and earthbound are more appropriate than the exalted and great. **137.** If therefore they are looking for some more majestic meaning than this, such that it is unworthy to think of the Only-begotten as from the Father's nature, let them say whether in their ineffable wisdom they know something higher than the

Father's nature, so that they can lift up the Only-begotten God to that, and raise him above his relation to the Father. If however the majesty of the divine nature is above all height, and transcends every awesome power, what argument is left to enhance the meaning of the title 'Son'? **138.** So it is conceded that every significant term applied to the Only-begotten, even if it is used as a lowly designation, is correctly used when it shifts in meaning towards the more
[p. 50] magnificent, and it appears that no one can | find an interpretation of this title 'Son' more majestic, when it expresses his lawful kinship with his Begetter; I think there is no need to dwell further on the topic, when it is sufficiently demonstrated by what has been said that it is not right to reinterpret the title 'Son' in the same way as the other names.

139. Our attention must return to the book. It is not possible for the same people, 'not to refuse to call the one begotten an offspring,' (I shall quote their actual words) 'because begotten being and the title "Son" possess such a relationship,'—and at the same time to change the naturally proper meanings into allegorical metaphors. It is one or the other: either their previous attempt has failed, and they resort in vain to the 'natural order' to argue that one must designate the one begotten an 'offspring' (γέννημα); or else, if that succeeds, their other case is demolished by the foregoing arguments. For the one called 'offspring' according to their argument, has, for that very reason, not the nature to be called 'a thing made' or 'a thing created'. **140.** There is a great deal of difference in the meaning of each one of the names, and one who uses the names in a thoughtful way ought to use the locutions with the matter they refer to in mind, so that we do not suffer confusion about the ideas, wrongly attaching words to meanings. For this reason, we call what is produced by his skill the 'work' of the craftsman, but the one sprung from him we refer to as the 'son' of a man, and no sensible person would call either the work a 'son', or
[p. 51] the son a 'work'; that would be to confuse and muddy the | true meaning by the misleading use of the words. **141.** We are therefore compelled to assert one or other of these two truths about the Only-begotten: if he is Son, we do not call him a creature, and if he is created, we are not allowed the title 'Son';—just as heaven, earth and sea and all that is in them, being created things, do not come under the appellation 'son'. Since however Eunomius testifies that the Only-begotten God is begotten, and the testimony of adversaries is strongest confirmation of the truth, then he assuredly maintains at the same time that, since he says he is begotten, he is also not created.

So much for these arguments. Many words come flooding in upon us, and so that the quantity does not get out of hand, we shall content ourselves with these on the subjects in question.

[p. 52] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Two**

§§1–15 Eunomius on the passionate aspects of begetting and birth

1. It is high time we turned our attention to Eunomius' elaborate philosophical account in his book of the nature of the γέννημα.[38] I shall quote word for word exactly what stands in his elegant writing against the truth. He says:

> For who is so indifferent and unobservant of the nature of existent things that he does not know this: of the bodies which are subject to observation as begetting and being begotten[39] on the earth, to action and passivity, those which beget naturally pass on their own essential being to those begotten, and those begotten participate in the same, inasmuch as they share the same material origin, and the sustenance which comes to them from outside;—of all these, the begotten are born in the course of passion,[40] and those which beget in the course of nature have no clean activity, because their nature is linked to all kinds of passions.

2. You see how respectful of the Word of God in the Beginning is the way he deals with interpreting the begetting before the ages, he who so scrupulously examines the nature of things, terrestrial bodies and material origins and passion of begetting and being born, and all that sort of thing; these would make any intelligent person blush, even if they were said about ourselves,
[p. 53] parading in his text | our passionate nature. Yet such is our wordsmith's fine treatment of the nature of the Only-begotten God. **3.** We however refrain from indignation (what more can moaning do for us to demolish the malice of our adversaries?); let us advertise as clearly as we can the intention of the words quoted, what sort of begotten thing is the object of the thought, that consisting of flesh, or that consisting of the Word of God. **4.** There are two kinds of contemplation, that of the divine, simple and immaterial life, and that of material and passible existence (*hypostasis*); and since begetting applies equally to

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38 This might be rendered, 'begotten thing', 'born thing' or 'offspring'; cf. n. 5 to Part 1 above.

39 We are using 'beget' and 'begotten' for Greek γεννα- and cognates, because in these books it mostly refers to father and son. It in fact applies to the common generation in animals and humans, and so can in other contexts mean 'conceive(d)' or 'bear/born'. Cf. n. 5 to Part 1 above.

40 Πάθος can also be translated 'suffering' or 'passivity', and does not necessarily imply passionate emotion, only loss of total control. It is however generally held to be incompatible with God's nature.

both, it is necessary to keep quite clear and unconfused the difference between their meanings; otherwise the use of the same term 'begetting' might misrepresent the truth. So since the fleshly coming into being is a physical thing and proceeds through passion, while what is incorporeal, intangible, invisible and free from material contamination, is incompatible with any passible condition, one must first consider what sort of begetting we are talking about, the pure and divine, or the passionate and sordid. **5.** No one can deny that the subject proposed in the book is the existence before the ages of the Only-begotten God. Why then does he constantly dwell upon this bodily physiology, staining nature with his disgusting compilation of words, advertising the passionate elements in human generation, and forsaking his intended subject? We have no need to learn about this biological begetting, which is constituted by flesh.
[p. 54] **6.** Who is so silly that, when he looks at himself and observes | humanity in himself, he wants another to explain to him his own nature, and needs to be told about the inevitable passions, which are seen to accompany the birth of the body—that the one who conceives suffers in one way, the one conceived in another—in order for the man to learn from this teaching, that he himself begets through passion, and that passion was the start of his own begetting? **7.** With these things, it makes no difference whether they are said or left unsaid, whether one publicizes hidden things, or whether one conceals the secrets in silence; that our nature comes forth through passion we know well enough. What we seek is to clarify our account of the sublime and ineffable existence of the Only-begotten, whereby he is believed to exist from the Father.

8. Having proposed this as his subject, our new theologian adds to his text flux, passion, material cause, activity not free from filth, sustenance flowing in from outside, and all that sort of thing; I know not what has happened to the one who claims that to his pre-eminent wisdom nothing intangible remains outside his knowledge, and promises to explain the ineffable begetting of the Son. Forsaking his subject, eel-like he crawls down into the slimy mud of his reasoning, rather like that Nicodemus who came by night, and who, when the Lord was teaching about heavenly rebirth, dragged the matter down by his reasoning to that of labour in the womb, and, perplexed about how it could happen again a second time within the belly, said. 'How can this be?' (*Jn* 3.9).
[p. 55] | Nicodemus thought that, because an old man could not again be carried in the mother's womb, he could prove spiritual birth unsustainable. **9.** In his case too the Lord corrects his erroneous assumption, pointing out that the properties of the flesh and of the spirit are incompatible, and Eunomius also might be corrected, if he were willing, by the same arguments. I think the one who contemplates the truth ought to consider his subject in its own terms, and not use material categories to slander the immaterial. If a man or a cow or

anything else that breeds biologically is not clear of passion as it conceives and is born,[41] what has that to do with the impassible and unsullied nature? **10.** Neither does our mortality infringe the immortality of the Only-begotten, nor does the turning of men to wickedness call in question the immutability of the divine nature, nor is anything else of ours attributed also to God. The distinctive character of human and divine life is unmixed and unshared, and the characteristics by which they are known are quite at variance, so that the former are not attributed to the latter, nor, vice versa, the latter to the former.

11. Why then does Eunomius, when the subject of his book is the divine begetting, forsake his subject, and go on about terrestrial things, when we have no dispute with him about those matters? The purpose of his device is obvious: it is to use the slander of passion to circumscribe the begetting of the Lord. **12.** In response to this I set aside the question of blasphemy, and marvel at the fellow's subtlety, the way he remembers his own purpose: having argued in the previous passage that the Son must be, and be called, a begotten thing (γέννημα),[42] he now contends that we should not attribute begetting to him. If all begetting, as he supposes, is closely bound up with passion, then it is necessary to conclude from this that what has nothing to do with passion, must
[p. 56] surely have nothing to do with | begetting either. If these two things, passion and begetting, are considered to be joined together, what has no part in one of them will have no participation in the other. **13.** Why then does he call him a γέννημα because of his begetting, when on his present argument he is shown not to have been begotten? And why does he quarrel with our master,[43] who recommended that we should not go rashly inventing terms where doctrines of God are concerned, but while we confess that he was begotten, we should not change the form in which this idea is expressed, so as to call the one begotten a γέννημα, when this word is used by scripture for lifeless things and for those taken as models of evil?[44] **14.** Yet when we ourselves say that we should not use the word γέννημα, he mobilizes that invincible rhetoric of his, bringing along in support his grammatical nit-picking, and through the learned deployment, or manipulation, or whatever one ought to call it, of the terms, he concludes his syllogisms and does not refuse to call the one begotten a γέννημα.[45] **15.** When however we accept this and consider the meaning of the term, and

41 Or, 'begets and is begotten'.

42 Cf. n. 38 above.

43 I.e. Basil. Jaeger refers to Basil, *CE* II, 620C–D and especially 584–5.

44 Cf. the discussion in *CE* III.1 §94–§102 above. Jaeger refers to Basil, *CE* II, 585 C and following, 588A and following.

45 Alluding to Eunomius' words cited in III.1 §4 and elsewhere.

that community of essential being is thereby indicated as well, he takes his own words back, and contends that the γέννημα was not begotten, obliterating with sordid biology of physical reproduction the pure, divine and passionless begetting of the Lord; as if it were impossible for the two to coincide in God,
[p. 57] authentic sonship to his Father and impassibility | of nature, but if there were impassibility, there could not be begetting, and if there one allows authentic sonship, one must inevitably accept passion along with begetting.

§§16–24 Passionless begetting in St John's Gospel

16. Sublime John is not like that, nor is his thunderous voice like that, when it proclaims the mystery of truth about God. He both calls him Son of God and wipes his proclamation clean of all thought of passibility. Notice how in the preface to his Gospel he prepares the audience, how much care he takes in his teaching that none of his hearers should descend into mean ideas, slipping down through ignorance into improper opinions. **17.** To keep the uneducated hearer as far away as possible from passion, he did not in his prologue refer to Son, nor to Father, nor to begetting. This would prevent any one, hearing of the Father being drawn down to the literal meaning of the term, or responding to the proclamation of the Son by taking it in its terrestrial sense, or tripping over the word 'begetting' like a stumbling-block. Instead of 'Father', he names the 'Beginning', instead of 'was begotten', simply 'was', and instead of 'Son', 'the Word'; and he says, 'In a Beginning was the Word' (*Jn* 1.1).[46] What passion is there in these, 'Beginning', 'was', and 'Word'? Is the 'Beginning' passion? Is 'was' with passion? Is 'the Word' by passion? **18.** Or, since there is no passion in the words used, is no association with it implied in the proclamation either? Indeed, how else could the authentic community of being and the coeternity of the Word with his Beginning be expressed, if not in these words?
[p. 58] He does not say, 'The Word was begotten from the Beginning,' in order not to | uncouple the Word paratactically from the Beginning, but proclaims the one in the Beginning simultaneously with the Beginning, declaring the 'was' to belong alike to the Beginning and to the Word; so that the Word should not be put later than the Beginning, but be heard first in the proclamation, arriving together with faith in the Beginning, before the Beginning is received alone.

19. He says next, 'And the Word was with God.' The Evangelist is still afraid of our want of education, still fears our infantile and untrained state; he does not yet trust his audience with the title 'Father', so that no one somewhat inclined to carnal thought might, as a result of learning about the Father, mentally

46 For this interpretation of ἀρχή as a reference to the Father in Gregory, see Mann I p.362 s.v. ἀρχή II.2.c. It seems to derive from Origen, *in Joh* I 102 (17) (*SC* 120 pp. 112–115).

picture a mother too. Neither does he yet use the name 'Son' in his message, for he still suspects our habituation to the lower nature, in case someone should hear 'Son', and turn the divine into human by an idea involving passibility. **20.** For this reason, in taking up his message he again used the title 'Word', speaking natural language to you who do not believe. Just as your own word both manifests itself out of the mind, and does not come through any medium of passion, so in this other case, when you hear 'Word', you will understand that it comes from some one, but do not infer passion. That is why, in taking up his message again he says, 'And the Word was with God.'[47] How he sets the Word continuously beside God! Or rather, how he sets beside each other the Infinite and the Infinite! The Word was with God, the whole Word, indeed, with the whole of God. Therefore, however great God is, the Word, who is with him, is surely equally great: so if God has limits, the Word to be sure is limited too; but if the infinity of God transcends limitation, then the Word, envisaged as simultaneous, is not comprehended in limits and measures either. **21.** No one
[p. 59] would say | that the Word is not simultaneously envisaged with the whole of the deity of the Father, otherwise some part of God would be proved to have Word, another part to lack Word. Again the spiritual voice of John, again the Evangelist in his message, nurses the audience of infants; we are not yet grown up enough in his early words to hear 'Son' and remain immune from slipping up on the habitual meaning. **22.** Therefore once again the herald in his third sentence still cries 'Word', and does not announce 'Son': he says, 'And the Word was God.' He first said in whom he was, then with whom he was, and now he says what he is, in the third repetition completing the pattern of his announcement. It was not some word, he says, in one of the obvious senses, that I proclaim when I use the term, 'the Word', but God: this Word, who was in a Beginning, and was with God, was not something else alongside God, but actually was himself God. **23.** By the constant, cumulative repetition of his loud announcement, the herald calls him God: the one already referred to in his announcement, he it is through whom all things were made, and who is life, and light of men, and true light shining in darkness, and not obscured by the darkness, dwelling with his own and not received by his own, becoming flesh and in the flesh inhabiting the human race. After an account of such a length

47 We have used the traditional translation, 'with God' in *Jn* 1.1. Πρὸς τὸν θεόν however does not use the normal word for 'with', but πρός. This implies a lying alongside, or butting close up against, in a greater closeness than merely keeping company one with another. It is this sense of closeness that Gregory exploits in the following lines. That is reasonable, since a human word, whether expressed or merely thought, belongs more intimately to the thinker or speaker than a companion would; the same is true, he claims, of the Word of God.

and such a kind, he finally speaks of the Father and names the Only-begotten, only when there is no longer any danger that one thus thoroughly purified might slip into some sordid concept because of the term 'Father'. 'We beheld,' he says, 'his glory, glory as of an Only-begotten from a Father' (*Jn* 1.2–14).

§§24–27 The pure childbearing of St Mary

[p. 60] **24.** Speak to the Evangelist, | Eunomius, on these points, speak to him those wise words of yours, how you name Father and Only-begotten in your book, when all bodily generation operates through passion. Truth will surely answer you on his behalf, that the mystery of the study of God is one thing, the study of the nature of bodies in flux quite another. They are separated by a large gap. Why do you link incompatible things together in your book? Why do you soil what is pure with sordid argument? Why verbalize the incorporeal with the passions of the body? Do not discuss the nature of things above on the basis of those below. **25.** I proclaim the Lord as Son of God, because the Gospel from heaven thus proclaimed him through the shining cloud: 'This,' it says, 'is my beloved Son' (*Mt* 17.5).[48] Because I heard 'Son', I was not of course dragged down by the word to the terrestrial meanings of 'son', but I both learn, 'from the Father', and do not learn, 'from passion'. I have this also to add to what has been said already: I know even a bodily birth[49] that is free from taint of passion, by which to demonstrate that Eunomius' natural history of bodily birth is false, if indeed there is found a bodily child-bearing void of passion. **26.** Does it say, 'The Word became flesh,' or does it not? You cannot say he has not become flesh; he became it, then, and there is no denying it.[50] How then was God manifest in flesh? By childbirth, you will surely say. What sort do you speak of? Or is it clear that it was in a Virgin, and that what was begotten in her was of the Holy Spirit, and that the days of her childbearing were fulfilled, and she gave birth, and her incorruption was no less conserved in her childbearing?[51] **27.** Furthermore, you believe the birth from a woman to be pure of passion (if indeed you do believe it), but do you reject the divine and unsullied birth from the Father,

48 The words 'shining cloud' fix the allusion to Matthew's account of the Transfiguration, though the same heavenly words occur at the Baptism of Jesus in *Mt* 3.17.

49 Γέννησις: the translation 'birth' is preferred to 'begetting' in the particular context.

50 The words used for 'become', 'become [flesh]', could also give the translation, 'You cannot say he was not born; he was born then, . . .' For consistency, the biblical words would also have to be rendered, 'The Word was born flesh.'

51 The phrases in this sentence are culled from biblical accounts, *Mt* 1.20 and *Lk* 2.6–7. The last point however, the abiding virginity of St Mary in her child-bearing, reflects a widespread belief already found in such sources as *Protevangelium of James* 19–20.

so that you may not associate passion with his begetting? In fact I know well
[p. 61] that it is not | passion that he avoids in his teaching, something which he never envisages from the beginning in the divine and unsullied nature: rather, it is in order that the maker of all creation may be reckoned a part of creation, that he sets out this argument for denying the Only-begotten God, using to help him his feigned concern about not attributing passion.

§§28–38 Eunomius understands begetting in a way that equates Christ with creatures

28. This also shows clearly what he contends for in his writings. He says,

> The being of the Son was begotten by the Father: not produced by extension, not drawn forth by flux or division from the conjunction with the Begetter, perfected by growth, not shaped by alteration, but acquiring being solely by the will of the Begetter.

Can any one whose mind's eye is not tight shut be unaware that Eunomius is arguing by these words that the Son is part of the creation? **29.** What is to stop all of these things, as they are, word for word, being said of everything else that is regarded as created? If you like, we might adapt the statement to one of the phenomena in creation, and if it does not point to the same conclusion, we shall deliver the verdict against ourselves, as treating the statement with abuse, and not with appropriate concern for the truth. So, replacing the word Son, we shall repeat the whole statement word for word: **30.** 'We say that the being of *the earth* was begotten by the Father: not produced by extension[52] or
[p. 62] division from the | conjunction with the Begetter, not perfected by growth, not shaped by alteration, but acquiring being solely by the will of the Begetter.' Is there anything in those words, which fails to fit the reality (*hypostasis*) of the earth? **31.** No one, I think, would say so. God was not extended to produce the earth, nor did he by outflow or by splitting himself from conjunction with himself bring its being into existence, nor complete it by gradual increase from small to great, nor by undergoing any change or alteration was he transformed into the shape of the earth, but for bringing into existence the being of things made, his will sufficed. 'He spoke, and they were made' (*Ps* 32/33.9), so that we should not dissent from the use of the word 'begetting' also for the coming into existence (ὑπόστασις) of the earth. **32.** If this can be truly said, then, of

52 To match the words of Eunomius quoted in §28, add here, 'not produced by flux'. Gregory goes on in §31 as though those words stood here. But he tends to be inexact in his quotations from Eunomius, and he may have left these words out.

the constituent parts of the world, what doubt remains about the opponents of the doctrine, that while verbally they use the title 'Son', they argue that he is one of the things made by creation, superior to the rest only in degree of seniority? **33.** In the art of the blacksmith, one can say that all iron implements are of the same material, but that making the tools of tongs and hammer, by which the iron is knocked into useful shape, has precedence over the rest, yet it is not the case that, because the one comes before the others, there is a difference of material between the shaping tool and the iron being forged by the tools, for they are both made of iron; it is the shape of one that precedes the other. Just like that is the theologizing of the heresy about the Son, which sup-
[p. 63] poses that the | Lord himself differs in no way in his essential being from the things made by him, except for the difference of order.

34. Who is there, then, that is in any way reckoned to be a Christian, who will allow the same definition of essential being to apply to the constituent parts of the world and to the one who made the world? I for one shudder at the blasphemy, knowing that, where things have the same definition, they must surely have no difference of nature. Just as Peter and John and the rest of mankind have a common definition of their being, and one nature, in the same way, if the Lord is the same in nature as the parts of the world, then whatever they attribute to those parts, they are bound to agree he is also subject to. **35.** Yet the world does not last for ever, so for them the Lord too will pass away together with heaven and earth (cf. *Mt* 24.35), if indeed he is of the same kind as the world. If however he is confessed as eternal, they are bound to suppose that the world is not deemed to be excluded from the divine nature, if indeed that reaches the Only-begotten by creation. You can see where the argument gets to by this fine logic! It is like a stone broken off from a pinnacle and fallen flat under its own weight. Either the elements of the world too must appear, as in the vanities of Hellenism, to be objects of worship, or the Son must not be worshipped either. **36.** Let us think of it like this. We say that the creation was made from nothing, both the intellectual creation and what belongs to physical nature; they proclaim these things also of the Lord. We say that all things made were constituted by God's will; they assert this also of the Only-begotten. We believe that neither the angelic creation nor that within the
[p. 64] world is from the Father's essential being; | they separate him similarly from the Father's being. We confess that the whole universe is subservient to the will of its Maker; they have the same opinion about the Only-begotten, too. **37.** All the other things, therefore, which they attribute to this creation, they must of necessity also attach to the Only-begotten, and whatever they believe about him, they must apply to the creation; so that if they confess the Lord to be God, they will deify the rest of creation, and if they specify that these do not

participate in the divine nature, they will not reject the same understanding of the Only-begotten either. Yet no one in his right mind will claim deity for the creation; so we cannot—I omit the rest of the sentence, so as not to taint my tongue with the blasphemy of my opponents: where the logic leads is for those to say, whose tongue is well exercised in blasphemy. **38.** The case holds even if they say nothing. It must be one thing or the other: either they will openly reject the Only-begotten God, so that for them he no longer is that, nor is so called; or if they assert his deity, they will assert the same for the whole creation too. There remains one choice, to flee the blasphemy apparent on either hand, to take refuge in the doctrine of true religion, and to concede that he is surely not created, so that they may confess him to be truly God.

§§39–42 Christ's nature superior to that of angels

39. What need is there to spend time putting into words all the other blasphemies that, starting from here, are bound to lurk under this argument? One who
[p. 65] looks past the words used to their implication will perceive | that the father of lies, the designer of death, the inventor of evil, being created with a nature intelligible,[53] immortal and incorporeal, was not inhibited by his nature from changing into what he is. The mutability of his being, moved either way at will, has the power of his nature, which follows the inclination of his free will, to become that to which its free choice may lead it away. **40.** Thus they will be making the Lord also receptive to contrariety, as they drag him down by creation to the level of the angels. But they ought to listen to the great voice of Paul (cf. *Heb* 1.5–12). Why does he say that he alone is called Son? Because he is not of the nature of the angels, but of a higher: 'To which of the angels did he ever say, "You are my Son"? And when again he brings his Firstborn into the world, he says, "And let all angels of God worship him." **41.** And to the angels he says, "He who makes his angels spirits and his servants a flame of fire," but to the Son, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of your kingdom is a sceptre of right," '—and all the other words about divinity which the prophecy continues with. He adds also from another hymn of praise more of the same: 'You, Lord, in the beginnings laid the foundations of earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands,' and all that follows, as far as, 'But you are the same, and your years shall not fail.' By these words he describes the immutability and eternity of his nature. **42.** If then the godhead of the Only-begotten excels the angelic nature quite as much as the owner is superior to his slaves,
[p. 66] why do they assimilate | the Lord of creation to the creation, or the one angels

53 Νοερός, here applied to the Devil's nature and translated 'intelligible', means in the technical sense part of the order of creation which is mentally, not physically, perceived.

worship to the angelic nature? To describe the kind of existence he has, they use those terms, which properly fit individual items observed in creation; we have already shown that the account of the Lord produced by the heresy specifically and properly belongs to the construction of the earth.

§§43–57 Christ as Firstborn

43. Nevertheless, so that no uncertainty may remain in those who come upon our work, about whether any support is provided for the heretical doctrines, it might be right to add one more point from the divinely inspired scripture to those we have considered. They will perhaps say on the basis of the very apostolic writings we have referred to, 'Why is he called "firstborn of creation" (*Col* 1.15), if he were not that which creation is?' Every firstborn is the first born, not among things of another kind, but among things of its own kind, as Reuben, being earlier than those counted after him, was by birth a firstborn man among men, and many others are called firstborn among the brothers counted with them. **44.** So they say, 'Whatever we perceive as the essential being of all creation, we say that its firstborn has the same. If all creation is of the same being (ὁμοούσιος) as the Father of the universe, the same we will allow is true of creation's Firstborn; if on the other hand the God of the universe differs in his being from the creation, we are obliged to say that the Firstborn of creation does not share his being with God either.'[54] Such is the argument for the opposition, in no way, I believe, more poorly presented by us against our case than
[p. 67] it might perhaps be | stated against us by our adversaries. What must be recognized in response, will now be made clear to the best of our ability in our book.

45. In all his writings the word 'Firstborn' is used by the Apostle four times, but he mentions it variously and not in the same way. In one case he speaks of 'the Firstborn of all creation' (*Col* 1.15), in another of the 'Firstborn among many brothers' (*Rom* 8.29), in a third of the 'Firstborn from the dead' (*Col* 1.18), while in the letter to Hebrews the title 'Firstborn' is unqualified, being used by itself: he says, 'And when again he brings the Firstborn into the world, he says, "And let all his angels worship him." ' **46.** Having made these distinctions, it would be as well to consider each one of them separately by itself, how he is Firstborn, of all creation, how among many brothers and from the dead, and how, after each of these has been separately mentioned by itself, when again he comes into the world, he is worshipped by all his angels. So may we, please, begin from the last of the points under consideration.

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54 Jaeger prints this quotation in spread type, as though it were the words of Eunomius or a supporter. The context rather implies that it is Gregory's own presentation of what he understands to be the heretics' case.

47. 'When again he brings the Firstborn into the world,' it says. The addition of the word 'again'[55] indicates from the literal meaning of this term that this is not happening for the first time; for we use this term for the repetition of things that have already happened. He therefore refers in the text to the dreadful manifestation of the Judge at the end of the ages, when he is no longer seen
[p. 68] in the form of a slave (*Phil* 2.7), but | majestically seated on the throne of his kingdom, and worshipped by all the angels round about him. **48.** Because of this, the one who once entered the world, having become the Firstborn from the dead, and of brethren and of all the creation, when he again comes into the world, as the one who judges all things in righteousness, as the prophecy says (*Ps* 95/96.13), does not cast off the name of Firstborn, which he once received for our sake, but, just as in the name of Jesus every knee bows at the Name above every name (*Phil* 2.10), so also he who has come to bear the name 'Firstborn' is worshipped by the whole complement of angels; he rejoices in the reclamation of mankind, which by becoming our Firstborn he has again reclaimed to its original grace. **49.** There is joy, we know, for the angels over those rescued from sin (cf. *Lk* 15.10), because until now that whole creation shares the misery and travail of our life of futility (*Rom* 8.22), deeming our destruction its own loss; therefore, when the revealing of the sons of God comes about, which they always look for on our behalf and await, and when the sheep is restored to the celestial Hundred (*Lk* 15.4–6) (and we, the human race, are surely that sheep, which the Good Shepherd has rescued by becoming Firstborn), then especially they will bring their worship to God in intense thanksgiving to him, who has as Firstborn reclaimed the one who forsook his father's home (cf. *Lk* 15.11–24).

50. Now that we have made these observations, no one should be in doubt about the other instances, for what reason he becomes Firstborn of the dead, or of creation, or among many brothers. These all point to the same end, though
[p. 69] each one has | its own special sense to reveal. 'Firstborn from the dead' is what he becomes, who first by himself loosed the birth-pangs of death (*Acts* 2.24), so as to lead all to the birth that comes from resurrection. **51.** Again, becoming Firstborn among brothers, the one who was first to be born in the water of the new birth of regeneration (cf. *Tit* 3.5), whose birth-pangs were attended by the hovering of the dove (cf. *Mk* 1.10 par), whereby he makes those, who share a like birth with him, his own brothers, he also becomes Firstborn of those born after him of water and the Spirit (*Jn* 3.5). In short, there are three births among us, by which the human race is made alive, the physical birth,

55 In the text of *Hebrews* the word 'again' is used to indicate an addition to the argument. The beginning of the sentence is usually translated in Bibles, 'And again, when he brings the Firstborn into the world, he says . . .' Gregory makes it apply to Christ's second coming.

that which accords with the mystery of regeneration, and that which is from the expected rising again from the dead, and in all three he becomes Firstborn: when the two-fold regeneration operates in two, in the baptism and in the resurrection, himself having become the pioneer in each; in the flesh however he becomes Firstborn, by having first and uniquely achieved the birth unknown to nature through the Virginity, a birth which no human being had in so many generations anticipated. **52.** If these points have been intelligently understood, what is meant by the creation, of which he is firstborn, will be known as well. We are aware of two creations of our nature, the first by which we were fashioned, and the second by which we were refashioned; but there would have been no need for our second creation, if we had not soiled the first through disobedience. The first having grown old and vanished, the new creation had
[p. 70] to be made in Christ, as the Apostle says, | expecting to see no more of the things grown old in the new creation: 'Having taken off,' he says, 'the old man with his works and desires, put on the new man created according to God (*Col* 3.9; *Eph* 4.22–24); and he says, 'If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the ancient things have gone, see, all things are made new' (*2 Cor* 5.17). The Maker of human nature is one and the same, both at the first and thereafter. **54.** Once he took stuff[56] from the ground and shaped man, then he took the stuff from the Virgin,[57] and did not simply shape man, but shaped him round himself; first he created, thereafter he was created; first the Word made flesh, thereafter the Word became flesh (*Jn* 1.14), so that he might reconstitute our flesh as spiritual because of his own participation with us in flesh and blood (cf. *Heb* 2.14). It was of this new creation in Christ, which he himself pioneered, that he was called 'Firstborn', becoming the first fruit (cf. *1 Cor* 15.20) of all, both of those born in life, and of the dead revived in resurrection, so that he might be Lord both of dead and of living (*Rom* 14.9), and by the first fruit in him sanctify together the whole dough (cf. *Rom* 11.16).

55. That it is not in terms of his pretemporal existence that 'Firstborn' applies to the Son, is evidenced by the title 'Only-begotten'. One that is truly only-begotten has no brothers, for how could an only-begotten be reckoned among brothers? But just as he is called God and Man, Son of God and Son of Man, form of God and form of a slave, being some of these in his transcendent nature, and becoming the others by the dispensation of his kindness to men, so also, being Only-begotten God, he becomes the Firstborn of all creation, Only-
[p. 71] begotten as he who is at the paternal breast, | but, in those who are being saved through the new creation, Firstborn of creation both in deed and in name.

56 Literally, 'soil'.

57 Literally, 'from virginity'.

56. If however, as the heresy would have it, he is called 'Firstborn' because he was constituted before the rest of creation, the name does not conform to the arguments they used about the Only-begotten God. For they do not assert that the Son and all things were both alike made by God, but they call the Only-begotten God a 'making' (ποίημα) of the Father, and all the rest, of him. **57.** So, on the principle by which, teaching that the Son was created, they name God the Father of his creation, surely on the same principle, by saying that all things were constructed by the Only-begotten God, they will call him, not Firstborn of the things made by him, but more accurately Father, since the same relationship of both to their creations produces in consequence the same designation. If, strictly speaking, the God over all is not Firstborn of his own creation, but is called Father, on the same principle, surely, the Only-begotten God is also correctly named Father of his own creatures, not Firstborn; so that the title 'Firstborn' would be in all respects inaccurate and misleading, and would have no place on the heretical interpretation.

§§58–61 The spiritual birth or begetting of believers

58. We must however come back to those who associate passion with the divine begetting (γέννησις), and who therefore deny that the Lord was truly begotten, in order not to attribute passion. To say that passion is assuredly linked with birth,[58] and that therefore one must think of the Son without reference to the concept of begetting, so that the Divinity may remain unsullied and free from passion, might well seem to make sense to the gullible, but for those educated
[p. 72] in the divine | mysteries there is a refutation ready to hand in matters of common knowledge. **59.** Every one knows that it is birth that leads up to the true and blessed life, which is not the same as the one constituted from bloods and the will of the flesh (*Jn* 1.13), in which there is flux, change, gradual growth to adulthood and whatever else is attributed to this sort of birth. It is the other birth, from God, heavenly, and as the Gospel somewhere says, believed to be 'from above' (*Jn* 3.3,7),[59] which is not susceptible to the passions of flesh and blood. Otherwise our opponents should get up and demonstrate one or the other, either that there is no birth from above, or that it comes by passion! **60.** In fact they concur that there is such birth, and they find no passion in it. Therefore not all birth is associated with passion, but material birth implies passion, while the immaterial is free from passion. Why then must things

58 The word γέννησις ('begetting' or 'birth') needs this translation in the context.

59 The Greek ἄνωθεν can also mean 'again', but 'from above' seems to be Gregory's understanding of it here.

proper to the flesh necessarily be imposed on the unsullied begetting of the Son, and by a parody of earthly birth to exclude the Son from his affinity with the Father by an indecent physical account? **61.** If even in our case birth leads to two lives, one fleshly with passion, and one spiritual in purity, and no one reckoned to be any kind of Christian would deny the statement, how is it possible in the case of the Nature utterly pure for one thinking about begetting to infer passion?

§§62–65 The work of creation might equally imply divine passibility

62. A further point should be considered in addition to what has been said. If, because of fleshly passion, they reject the impassibility of the divine begetting, they ought also to believe, on the basis of the same instances—those in us, I
[p. 73] mean—that God does not design creation impassibly either. | If they judge the Divinity by our standards, they will confess that God neither begets nor creates; for neither of these is achieved by us impassibly. **63.** They ought then, perhaps, to exclude both from the divine nature creation and begetting, so as to preserve God's impassibility in both, and they ought to reject belief in the Only-begotten entirely from their doctrine, so as to keep the Father free from passion, neither tiring himself with creation nor defiled by begetting. Alternatively, if they allow that the one is achieved impassibly by the divine power, they should not quarrel about the other; for if he creates without effort and material, surely he also begets without effort and flux. **64.** Once again I have the support of Eunomius for this argument. I will quote, abbreviating his prolixity, summarizing in a few words his whole thought: 'Human beings do not produce materials for us, but by their art only impose form on the material.' This is the sense of the things he has said with great prolixity. **65.** If then, observing pregnancy and foetal formation in earthly begetting, he therefore rejects the pure kind of begetting, it follows that, as human creation on the same principle strives for form, but is unable to produce the material as well as the form, he ought therefore to refuse to think that the Father is Designer either. If however he will not think of the divine creation in terms of the limits of human power, he should not slander the divine begetting with human conditions either.

§§66–71 Eunomius seems to imply community of being in the work of creation

[p. 74] **66.** In order that the studied precision | in his remarks may stand out clearly, I shall again repeat a small part of his arguments. He says that

> things active and passive share each other's nature,

and after birth from corporeal things, he explains

> the application of creative designs to materials.

The observant listener should therefore take note from this how he misses his own mark, always wandering among matters he has hit on by chance. In what happens in the flesh the active and the passive do imply the same essential being, since one gives out a share of being, while the other receives it. **67.** Thus in the nature of beings he knows how to observe the truth accurately, so as to distinguish the one that gives a share of being from the one that receives it, and to say that each of them exists in itself as something other than the being; for the one giving or receiving a share is surely distinct from what is shared or given, so that one must first have some idea of something envisaged in its own particular being (ὑπόστασις), and only so to go on to speak about its giving what it has, or receiving what it has not. **68.** So having ridiculously spewed out this argument, the clever fellow again does not see that in what follows he refutes himself. The one who by his skill shapes pre-existing material to his liking surely makes something by his activity, and the material by its passivity undergoes shaping from the one who applies the skill; for it is not by remaining impassible and resistant that the material accepts the form imposed by the skill. **69.** If then even in the application of skill nothing whatever is made without passivity and activity combining with each other to produce what is made, how is it possible for our wordsmith to think he can by these arguments accommodate what he has himself said? By asserting the community
[p. 75] of being in passivity and activity, he is in danger | not only of attesting the common being of Begotten and Begetter, but of making the entire creation consubstantial with its maker, if in fact he declares the doing and the passivity to be homogeneous with each other in nature. **70.** By his very arguments therefore for his present position, he is negating his chief goal; by his own attack he makes stronger the case for ὁμοούσιος ('consubstantial'): if the begetting from another proves that the being of the begetter is in the begotten, while skilled construction, which is achieved through action and passivity, on his argument leads to community of being between maker and made, then our wordsmith, who argues in various parts of his writings that the Lord was begotten, **71.** by the very arguments he uses to alienate the Lord from the Father's being, himself attests their mutual bond. If, on his argument, separation of being is not implied either by begetting or by construction, then whatever he allows the Lord to be, whether created or begotten, either way he has affirmed the affinity of being, having logically demonstrated community of nature between making and being made, begetter and begotten.

§§72–81 Eunomius contradicts himself on gennema

72. We must however turn to the next part of his work. I ask the indulgence of readers for the detailed enquiry, which extends the argument more than is desirable. The danger is not about ordinary matters, where the damage suffered by those who miss some of the things which might be needed for a fully argued case might be slight, but we are at risk in the chief point of our hope. We have the prospect either of being Christians, not swept away in catastrophic heresy,
[p. 76] or | being totally dragged down into Jewish or Greek ideas. **73.** To avoid both of these unacceptable consequences, neither yielding to the Jewish teachings by denying the truly begotten Son, nor, by worshipping a creature, falling into the trap with those who adore idols, we are obliged to give further attention to the argument on this topic. We set out the actual text of Eunomius, which reads as follows:

> Such distinctions having been made, it might reasonably be said that the most authentic, chief and only Being which subsists by the Father's act receives into itself the titles "offspring" (γέννημα),[60] "thing made" (ποίημα) and "creature" (κτίσμα).

Shortly afterwards he says,

> The Son, subsisting by the Father's act, has nothing in common in his nature and his relation with the one who begot him.

74. Such are his words. For our part we shall first observe the internal conflict of our opponents, like spectators as our enemies fight among themselves, and after that set against them the truth of orthodox religion. The Son, he says, alone constituted by his Father's action, has a non-participatory relationship to the one who begot him. In an earlier place he says he

> does not refuse to call the one begotten an offspring, since begotten being and the title "Son" possess such a relationship in their titles.[61]

75. Given such obvious contradiction between his words, I am amazed at those who praise the intelligence of his doctrine. It would be very difficult to turn to one part of what he has said, and not be quite wrong about the other part.
[p. 77] His previous writing argued | that 'begotten being and the title "Son" possess such a relationship in their titles.' The present logic says the opposite, that the

60 On this term and translation, see *c.* III.1 §4 and notes.

61 This passage is quoted several times in *c.* III.1, where see §4 n. 3.

Son 'has nothing in common in his relation with the one who begot him.' If they believe the former, they surely cannot accept the latter; if they favour the latter, they will have to resist the former view. **76.** Who is to resolve their conflict? Who will mediate in their civil war? Who will compose the strife into harmony, when on the basis of these words the mind is itself at odds with itself, divided into opposing teachings? Perhaps this is the hidden meaning of the prophecy, which David utters about the Jews, 'They were split and were not pricked' (*Ps* 34/35.15). You can see that they are split over the opposition of doctrines, but are not aware of their mistake; they are borne about by the ears, like wine-jars carried by their handles at the whim of the one who keeps making changes.[62] **77.** It pleased him to say that begotten being was closely associated with the title, 'Son'; like people half asleep, they at once approved his words. Then he has switched his argument back to the opposite, and denies the relationship of the Son to the one who begot him; again his best friends give their consent to this too, just as the shadows of physical bodies automatically accommodate their shape to the movement of their model, crawling in whatever direction he wants, and even accepting it if he contradicts himself. This is a new form of the Homeric potion,[63] not changing the bodies of those affected by the drug into irrational beasts, but effecting the transformation
[p. 78] of their minds into irrationality. | **78.** Of the former the text says that their mind remained sound, while their shape changed to that of animals. In this case, however, their bodies retain their natural shape, while their minds are reshaped as irrational. Just as in the former case the poetical magic says that those who are drugged change into different animal shapes at the whim of her who bewitched their nature, now too those who drink this Circe-cup are affected in the same way. **79.** Those who drink in the wizard's tricks on the basis of the same text change into various forms of doctrine, now taking one shape, now another. Furthermore, his darlings follow the pattern of the poetic legend, and still love the one who leads them into this irrationality, and they stoop to gather up, like cornelian cherries or acorns,[64] the words he has scattered about, rushing greedily like swine after doctrines which lie on the ground, and lacking the nature which would let them look upon the sublime and celestial. That is why they fail to see the reverse twist of the argument, but grab indiscriminately

62 Gregory's joke here cannot be represented in English. The Greeks call wine jar handles 'ears'; so Eunomius' gullible followers believe whatever he tells them, and go wherever he takes them, carried by the 'ears'.

63 The story of Circe's drug is from Homer, *Odyssey* 10. In what follows Jaeger identifies direct allusions to lines 240–243, 316 and 433.

64 The fruits of Cornelian cherry (*cornus mas*) are edible, but like acorns are used for pig-food. Homer mentions them as fed to the men-become-pigs in his story.

what comes their way, whatever it happens to be. **80.** Just as it is said that the bodies of those stupefied by mandrakes are seized with numbness and lethargy, the mental perceptions of these people too are affected in the same way, and made too sleepy to perceive the deceit. It is a dreadful thing to be caught unawares even by hidden tricks through some fraudulent practice, though the misfortune is pardonable, if it is not deliberate; but intentionally and purposely to bring on oneself the experience of evil, not unaware of what is happening,
[p. 79] | goes beyond the extreme of misfortune. **81.** Why should one not be outraged, when we learn that even hungry fish avoid the approach of the bare iron hook, but when deceived by the bait seize it in the expectation of food, while for those to whom the evil is quite apparent to surrender themselves voluntarily to this destruction is more miserable than the irrational behaviour of fish. The fish are led to hidden destruction by greed, while these snap up the bare hook of wickedness. For what could be more obvious than this contradiction, of saying that the same One was both begotten and is a creature, both possesses the intimate relationship of the title 'Son' and conversely has nothing to do with the connotation of 'Son'?

But enough on this topic.

§§82–88a Eunomius contradicts himself on 'most authentic being'

82. It would perhaps be useful to look systematically at the whole meaning of Eunomius' text, which has been set before us, by going back to the beginning of his book. The part we have just discussed, because of the obvious contradiction in its wording, led us to begin our refutation straight away with the final parts. What Eunomius says at the beginning is this:

> Such distinctions having been made, it might reasonably be said that the most sovereign, chief and only Being which subsists by the Father's act receives into itself the titles "offspring" (γέννημα), "thing made" (ποίημα) and "creature" (κτίσμα).

[p. 80] **83.** I would first like to remind those who consider this argument, that | in his first publication he says that the being of the Father is also 'most authentic', opening his case with these words:

> The whole meaning of our doctrines is summed up in the highest and most authentic Being.[65]

65 See Gregory, *CE* 1.151. In my version (*El "Contra Eunomium I" en la produccion literaria de Gregorio di Nisa*, ed. L. F. Mateo-Seco/J. L. Bastero, Pamplona Ediciones Universidad de Navarra 1988), p. 57, the translation is different.

Here he calls the being of the Only-begotten 'most authentic' and 'first'. So if we put together the words of Eunomius from the two books, we can present him as an advocate of the shared being, the same man who elsewhere declares something to the effect that,

> Those which have the same designations do not have a different nature.[66]

84. He would not denote things different in nature with the self-same designations, the one who contradicts himself! It is surely because the definition of essential being is the same in Father and Son, that he says the former is 'most authentic', and the latter 'most authentic'. Human practice also supports the argument, since it would not designate anything 'most authentic', if the title did not truly fit the nature. Similarly we may loosely call a portrait a man, but authentically we use this word to designate the living being which appears to possess the nature. Similarly the text of scripture can refer to an idol or demon, and even a belly, as a god (*Phil* 3.19), but the designation lacks authenticity, and so with every other case. **85.** Someone may be said to have eaten during a dream while asleep, but we cannot call the dream authentic eating. It is like the case of any two who exist by nature as men; we use the word 'man' authentically to designate either of them, whereas if one were to set a lifeless image
[p. 81] alongside the true man and count that, | he might speak of the true one and the likeness as two men, but would no longer claim authenticity for both. In the same way, if indeed the nature of the Only-begotten is understood as anything different from the being of the Father, our wordsmith would not have named both of their essential beings 'most authentic'. Why should one designate things different in nature with identical terms?

86. It seems that the truth is manifested even through those who oppose it, falsehood being unable totally to overpower the truth even in the words of its enemies. That is why the argument for true religion is proclaimed by the very lips of adversaries who do not know what they are saying, just as the saving work of the Lord's passion on our behalf was prophesied even by Caiaphas, though he knew not what he was saying (*Jn* 11.49–52). If therefore 'most authentic' applies to the being of both, the Father, I mean, and the Son, what room is left for the argument that the essential beings are different from each other? Or why is a difference of more powerful, greater, or more honourable envisaged between them, when the most authentic being admits no diminution? **87.** What exists imperfectly, whatever it be, does not exist authentically, not nature, nor power, nor rank, nor any other particular which might be thought of, such that the essential superiority of the Father, as the heresy would have it,

66 Perhaps a loose reference to the passage cited at III.5 §18 (so Jaeger).

proves the imperfection of the Son's being. If it is imperfect, it is not authentic; if 'most authentic', then surely perfect. It is not natural to call what is deficient a perfect nature. Neither, if one perfect thing is set beside another for comparison, is it possible to think of there being a difference in terms of excess or deficiency. The perfection is the same in both, as if you were using a ruler:
[p. 82] there is no gap where one falls short, nor surplus | where one exceeds. **88.** One may therefore see quite well from his statements Eunomius' advocacy of the doctrine we hold, or rather, not his support for us, but conflict with himself; for the very same weapons with which he establishes our doctrine, in his own arguments he turns against himself.

§§88b–102 Eunomius fails to justify his first principles

For our part, let us follow his statements word for word, so that it may be clear to all that, apart from his malicious intent, the argument they present has no power to do harm. **89.** So let us hear his words:

> It might reasonably be said that the most authentic, chief and only Being which subsists by the Father's act receives into itself the titles "offspring" (γέννημα),[67] "thing made" (ποίημα) and "creature" (κτίσμα).[68]

Everyone knows that what separates the church from heresy is the term 'creature' applied to the Son. Given therefore that this is by general consent the doctrinal difference, which would be the more reasonable thing to do, if he were trying to prove his own ideas more true than ours, to argue his own case, by what means he can, proving that the Lord should be reckoned a creature, or to set that aside, and make it a rule for his audience that they speak about the matters in contention as if they were settled? **90.** I myself would say this: almost all people of understanding would expect their opponents first to lay the foundation of their argument on some undisputed base, and then argue about the consequences. **91.** So our author ignores the question of whether he ought to be considered a creature, and goes straight on to the consequences, making
[p. 83] the subsequent argument depend upon an unsubstantiated assumption. | This is like the experience of those whose minds are plunged in unreal ambitions, overwhelmed by thoughts of becoming emperor or some other ambition. They do not think about how any of their hopes might be realized, but, as though it were achieved, dispose and organize their fortunate state for themselves

67 On this term and translation, see III.1 §4 and notes.

68 This is part of what is quoted in §73 above. The reference to Basil, *CE* II, given by Jaeger, is not relevant.

to suit their fancy, getting some sort of pleasure from wandering in unrealities. **92.** That is how our clever wordsmith has also somewhere laid to rest his famous dialectical skill, and before demonstrating the matter in question, tells his fairy tale as if it were to children, this fraudulent and unreasoned nonsense of his version of doctrine; he tells it like a story at a drunken party.

93. He says that,

> the being which subsists by the Father's act receives into itself the titles "offspring" (γέννημα), "thing made" (ποίημα) and "creature" (κτίσμα).

What argument proves that the Son exists by any act of construction, while the nature of the Father remained inoperative for the existence of the Son? The doubt, the point at issue, was this: whether the being of the Father begot the Son, or whether some agency external to his nature produced him. **94.** The church believes that, in accordance with divine doctrine, the Only-begotten is truly God; it abhors polytheistic superstition and for this reason rejects difference between the natures, lest such distinction of essential beings make the deities subject to enumeration, which amounts to reintroducing polytheism into our life. Given this characteristic teaching of the church, that the Only-begotten God is in his being true God from the being of the true God, how
[p. 84] should the one who opposes the recognized account go about refuting the | previously held idea? Is it not by arguing the opposite case, and from some mutually accepted starting-point resolving together the question at issue? I do not think any intelligent person would expect anything else. **95.** Eunomius however begins with the matters in dispute, and as though he had demonstrated the point in contention, makes it the premise of his subsequent argument. Once it was postulated that the Son exists by means of some action, what dispute could there be about what follows, which is to say that the being brought into existence by an action receives the designation, 'made thing'? How the conclusion is valid while the premise remains unproven, is for the advocates of deceit to answer. **96.** If one were to agree for instance that man had become winged, he would not raise objections to what follows: the one who has become winged would also fly somehow, and lift himself up from the ground, borne aloft on wings by the air. The question is, how would one who lacks the flying nature become winged? If that is not the case, it is futile to go on to what follows. **97.** So what Eunomius must first demonstrate is this, that the church's faith is vain, when it believes that the Only-begotten truly is Son, not as adopted to that status by one only nominally his father, but existing as by nature begotten from him that really is, and not foreign to the being of him that begot him. Let him first refute these as false beliefs, and then he will

be convincing when he explains the consequences; but while the first point remains unproven, it is nonsense to dwell upon those that follow. **98.** At this point let no one demand that what we have ourselves agreed upon should also be validated by argument. To demonstrate our position it is enough that the
[p. 85] tradition has come to us from the fathers, like an inheritance | passed down in succession from the Apostles by generations of holy persons. **99.** Those however who change their doctrines into this new form will need much support from rational arguments, if they are to win over not just scruffy and unstable men but serious and steady-minded thinkers. As long as their case is presented without argument and proof, who is so silly and brutish as to make the doctrine of the Evangelists and Apostles and the famous men in the churches after them inferior to this unproven nonsense?

100. Let us now observe also the most difficult to detect of our wordsmith's tricks, the way he, by his abundant argumentative skill, easily leads on the more simple-minded to our opponents' point of view. With the designation ποίημα ('made thing') and κτίσμα ('creature') he throws in also the word γέννημα ('offspring'), saying that the being of the Son receives these into itself; and as if haranguing a party of drunkards, supposes that no one will detect his doctrinal deviousness. Linking γέννημα with κτίσμα and ποίημα, he thinks he can quietly remove the difference of meaning in the terms by aligning incompatibles. **101.** These are his clever dialectical tricks. We however, 'the unskilled in argument', do not deny that we are what his book declares about us, as far as voice and tongue are concerned; but we profess that, in the words of the prophet, ears have been prepared for us,[69] too, for intelligent hearing. For this
[p. 86] reason we are in no way | led on by the linking of incompatible names into confusing their meanings, but, although the great Apostle names in the same passage wood, hay and straw, gold, silver and precious stones (*1 Cor* 3.12), we can count up the number of the items mentioned in a list, and we shall not be unaware of the distinctive nature of each of the things named. **102.** In the same way now, when γέννημα and ποίημα are mentioned together, as we pass from the words to what is signified, we do not attribute the same meaning to each of the titles; rather, κτίσμα signifies one thing and γέννημα another, so that, though Eunomius may mix up incompatibles, the wise listener will hear with discrimination, and will show that it is an impossibility for the titles 'begotten' and 'created' to be applied to a single nature. If one of these is true, the other will of necessity be false; so that if it is created, it will not be begotten, and conversely, if it is called 'begotten', it will not fit the title 'created'.

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69 Apparently alluding to the Greek of *Ps* 39.7 (40.6), 'ears you have prepared for me', not to *Is* 50.5 as Jaeger suggests.

§§103–110 On terms which imply relationship

103. Nevertheless, Eunomius says that 'the being of the Son receives into itself the titles "offspring" (γέννημα), "thing made" (ποίημα) and "creature" (κτίσμα).' Does he in what follows ensure the truth of this statement, unprefaced and unfounded, no firm basis having been laid down in the opening for what he is arguing? Or does he in what remains also cling to the same futility, not gaining additional support from logical arguments, but holding its blasphemous proposition in narrative detail and unsubstantiated, like the account of dreams?

[p. 87] **104.** He says, connecting these words to those quoted, that the being |

> has its begetting unmediated, indivisibly preserving its relation to the one who begot and made and created it.

If we ignore the 'unmediated' and 'indivisible', and concentrate on the meaning of the words by themselves, we shall find that everywhere the doctrinal absurdity is thrust upon the ears of those deceived, with no sustaining argument. 'The one who begot and made and created it,' he says. **105.** These may appear to be three, but in fact embrace two meanings, since the two words have the same force as each other where connotation is concerned. 'To make' is the same as 'to create', whereas 'begetting' means something different. Since therefore the common human understanding distinguishes between diverse meanings through the connotation of the words, what logic proves to us that 'making' means the same as 'begetting', so that we should associate the one reality with the different words? **106.** As long as the customary significance of the terms prevails, and no case is made for turning what the words denote into their opposites, it is not permissible to split one nature between the meanings of 'made' and 'begotten'. Since each of these terms used by itself has its own proper connotation, it must follow that the relational bond attributed to each word is also fitting and germane. **107.** Other terms expressing relationship have no affinity with what is alien and different, but even if the other party referred to is not mentioned, that with which the bond is made is automatically understood along with the given term: craftsman, for instance, or slave, friend, son and such-like. Anything that is defined with reference to something else, by

[p. 88] the use of the term | presents its own relationship, specific and linked to what is being described, and has no admixture of relationship with what is heterogeneous. **108.** The word 'craftsman' is not connected with the son, nor does the term 'slave' refer to the craftsman, neither does 'friend' imply the slave, nor 'son' the master, but we recognize the mutual relationship in each case as clear and distinct: by 'friend' we perceive another friend, by 'slave' the owner, by 'craftsman' the product, and by 'son' the father. Just so, then, 'begotten' (γέννημα) and

'made' (ποίημα) get their correct meaning in relationship. Therefore 'begotten' is linked to the one who begot, 'creature' (κτίσμα) to the one who created; and we must surely, if we are not going to introduce confusion of realities by instability of words, keep for each relational term its proper correlative meaning.

109. Now that it is clear what the meaning of each of these terms implies, how does one who presents his doctrines with syllogistic logic not understand the proper relational meaning of these words, but thinks one should associate what is begotten with one who made it, and what is made with one who begot it? He says that

> the being of the Son receives into itself the titles "offspring" (γέννημα), "thing made" (ποίημα) and "creature" (κτίσμα), but preserves indivisible its relation to the one who begot and made and created it.[70]

110. It is not possible for one thing to be divided between diverse relationships, but the son belongs to the father and the begotten to the begetter, while what is made is related to its maker—unless some one thinks that a misuse of words in some insignificant usage is more correct that the proper natural significance.

§§111–122 Eunomius deliberately confuses begetting with creation

[p. 89] | **111.** By what reasonings, by what kind of arguments, in accordance with his famous invincible logic, does he overturn the views of the majority and explain with authority, that when we think or speak of the supreme God and Creator and Father, the Son is properly described by both epithets, and equally called 'created' and 'begotten'? **112.** Verbal practice and correct usage properly distinguish words of this kind: the term 'begetting' is applied to things begotten from the actual being, while 'creature' is applied to those whose composition is external to the nature of the one who constructs them. For this reason the divine doctrines in the tradition of theology pass on 'Father and Son', not 'Creator and Work', so that there shall be no corrupting tendency to blasphemy, with such a title pushing 'Son' towards what is alien and foreign, and so that godless doctrines might find no access, when they rule out the affinity of essential being between the Only-begotten and the Father. Consequently, the one who says that the title 'creature' correctly fits the Son, will surely go on logically to say that the title 'son' applies properly to what is created, so that, if the Son is a creature, then the sky is a son, and every single one of the things made, according to our wordsmith, correctly bears the title 'son'. **113.** If in his case it is not from participating in the nature of the one who begot him that he

70 Repeating inexactly the quotations in §§103–4 above.

has the title, but it is because he is created that he is called 'Son', the same argument will mean that lamb, dog, frog, and every thing that came into existence by the Maker's will, should bear the title 'Son'. If however each of these things,
[p. 90] because it is external to the nature of God, is not a son and is not called God, | it surely follows that the Son properly speaking, because he is from the nature of his Begetter, is Son and is confessed to be God. **114.** He is disgusted however at the idea of begetting, and banishes it from divine doctrine, slandering the word with carnal, physical ideas. But on this subject our book has in its earlier parts sufficiently proved[71] that, in the words of the prophet, 'they are very afraid where no fear is' (*Ps* 52.6/53.5). In the case of human beings it has been shown that not all birth is achieved through passion, but the physical birth is by passion, the spiritual pure and unsullied; for what is born of the spirit is born as spirit and not flesh (*Jn* 3.6), and to spirit no capacity for passion can be attributed. In that case, since it seems necessary to our wordsmith to use examples from among ourselves in estimating the divine power, he ought to persuade himself on the basis of the other kind of birth to envisage the divine begetting as without passion. **115.** Instead, having confused with each other these three designations, of which two are equivalent, he thinks he can trick his audience, on the basis of the common meaning of two of them, into thinking of the third in the same way, too. Because the designation 'made' and 'created' implies that what is made is external to the nature of the maker, he tacks on to these the word 'begotten', as though this also had the same meaning as those already mentioned. This sort of argument, however, is known as fraud, deceit and cheating, not thoughtful and logical demonstration. **116.** Only what brings to light new thoughts on the basis of what is already agreed is called 'demonstration'; what leads astray through fraud, or uses cunning to achieve
[p. 91] the conclusion, or | confuses with superficial deceits the thinking of those who (in the Apostle's words) 'are corrupted in mind' (cf. *1 Tim* 6.5; *2 Tim* 3.8), no man of sense would call that logical proof.

117. Let us however turn to what follows. The being, he says,

> has its begetting unmediated, and indivisibly preserves its relation to the one who begot and made and created it.[72]

118. If he had mentioned the indivisibility and immediacy of the being and ended his comment with that, he would not have diverged from true religious belief; for we too hold the bond and immediacy of the Son to the Father, so

71 At length in §§1–27 above.

72 See §§103–104 above.

that there is nothing that lies between them, nothing which is found to divide the bond of the Son with the Father, no thought of temporal gap, not even that slightest point which, time being divided into past and future, as regards the present is reckoned in itself indivisible, not able to be part of either the past or the future, because it is entirely without extent or division, indistinguishable from what it is added to. So we say that what is absolutely unmediated is mediated by no such thing. **119.** What is separated by something in between would no longer be unmediated. Eunomius therefore, when he called the begetting of the Son 'unmediated', had he not added any of the other words, would have taught in truly religious fashion the bond of the Son with the Father. Since however, as though changing his mind, he straight away adds to his words that the being 'preserves its relation to the one who begot and made and created it,' he spoils the earlier remarks with the later, vomiting the blasphemous words all over the pure statement. **120.** It is evident that even in the earlier case
[p. 92] 'unmediated' | had no truly religious intent, but as one might say that the hammer mediates between the rivet and the smith, while the manufacture of the hammer is 'unmediated'; for when technical science had not discovered tools, by conceptual thought, not with some other tool,[73] the hammer was made first by the craftsman and everything else with that. The expression 'unmediated' shows that this is what the wordsmith thinks about the Only-begotten. **121.** Eunomius is not the only one who makes this error about this in his dogmatic wrong-headedness. The same can be found in the works of Theognostos, who says that God, intending to construct this universe, first brought into existence the Son, 'as a measure for the design'; he too failed to see the absurdity in the argument, that it was not for his own sake, but for something else that he comes to be, and is therefore surely inferior to that for the sake of which he comes to be; we need the agricultural implement for living, yet the plough is not reckoned as of equal value with life. **122.** In the same way therefore, if the Lord were for the universe, and not all things for his sake, the universe would be superior to the Lord, the universe for the sake of which they allege he came to be. This is also what they are now arguing in this book, in which they assert that the Son has 'unmediated' his relationship to the one who created and made him.

73 This is the reading of Jaeger, who adds 'not' to the sentence. Without it the text would read, 'by conceptual thought, using another tool.'

§§123–135 The uniqueness which Eunomius concedes to the Lord in fact applies to all creatures

123. He is however kind enough in the rest of his statement to say that the being is comparable with none of those which came to be by it and after it. Such are the gifts bestowed on the Lord by the enemies of the truth, and by them the blasphemy is very conspicuously argued. Which one, I ask, is there of all the remaining things that exist by creation, that is comparable with another,
[p. 93] | when universally the specific property apparent in each has nothing in common with those of another kind? There is no comparison of heaven with earth, nor of the latter with the stars; none of the stars with the sea, none of water with stone, none of animals with trees, none of ground-dwelling things with birds, none of quadrupeds with marine animals, nor of irrational beings with rational. **124.** Why should one bother to mention every one individually, to show that it is possible to say the same about all that is observed in creation, exactly what is tossed to the Only-begotten as something special, that it bears no comparison with what came to be after him and through him? It is clear that everything you might think of in itself, is incomparable with the whole and with individual things; and just what it is possible to say truly about any created thing, that it is adequate, the same is accorded by the enemies of the truth as sufficient rank and honour for the Only-begotten God. **125.** After such arguments as these, in what follows he dignifies him with hollow honours, using the titles 'Lord' and 'Only-begotten'; but so that no orthodox thought might be implanted in his hearers by these words, he immediately mingles blasphemies with his words of distinction. The passage goes as follows: he says,

> . . . inasmuch as the begotten being leaves no room for having things in common with any other (for he is Only-begotten), nor is the action of the one who made him considered as shared.

126. What an insult! As if he were haranguing beasts or fools which have no understanding (*Ps* 31/32.9), he arbitrarily turns his argument around between opposites; or rather, he behaves like those whose eyes have been removed,
[p. 94] since they often | behave badly in the eyes of observers, because they themselves cannot see, supposing that they are not seen. **127.** Who can be unaware of the contradiction in the words quoted? The being, he says, because it has been begotten, allows no room for having things in common with others, for it is Only-begotten. Having said this, truly as if either himself not seeing, or supposing he is not observed, he adds, as coordinate with those mentioned, things which have nothing in common with them, by attaching to the being of the Only-begotten the action of the one who made him. **128.** Surely the logical

reference of the Begotten is to the Begetter, and of the Only-begotten to the Father, and if one looks for the truth, one perceives in coordination with the Son, not the action of his Creator, but the nature of his Begetter.

129. Eunomius however, as though he were mentioning plants or seeds or something else in creation, links the action of the Creator to the existence (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten. If it had been a stone or a stick or something similar that was under consideration, it would be logical to think of the prior existence of the Creator's action; but if our opponents concede that the Only-begotten God is Son and exists by begetting, why are the same words applied to him and to the lowest parts of creation, and why do they reckon that what is truly said of the ant and the gnat, may be religiously used also of the Lord? **130.** For if one considers those points which distinguish the nature of the ant from all the rest of the animals, it would not be false to say that no action of its Maker is to be observed, which is common to it and the others. **131.** The same things therefore which apply to such creatures are claimed also for the Only-begotten. It is like the way huntsmen are said to catch passing beasts by
[p. 95] digging holes, hiding their device by | covering the opening of the hole with weak and insubstantial material, so that the pit may appear as level ground to those near it. The heresy devises that kind of trap for men: it hides the hole of impiety under those fair-sounding and devout words, as if with a flat cover, so that the less prudent, supposing that their message is the same as the true faith because the terminology is the same, rush into the mere name of 'Son' and 'Only-begotten', and step into the empty hole, where the meaning of the titles does not support their feet, but pitches them into the pit of denying Christ. That is why he mentions the begotten being which leaves no room for anything in common, and names him 'Only-begotten'; these are the coverings of the hole. **132.** If however one stops, before being caught in the gaping hole, applying rational criticism like a hand to the book, one perceives the deadliness of idolatry excavated by the doctrine. As one approaches God and Son of God, one finds a creature of God held up for worship. That is why they parade up and down the name of the Only-begotten, so that the deadly fate may be acceptable to the gullible, as though one were to mix poison with bread and so greet with death people who ask for food, who would not receive the deadly poison by itself, unless they were enticed by its appearance. So for his own purposes he cleverly works towards his goal. **133.** If he had rejected the word 'Son' altogether from his dogmatic system the deceit would become unacceptable to people, the denial being proclaimed openly by public announcement. As it
[p. 96] is he leaves only the name, and | by shifting its meaning to the idea of creation, he both establishes idolatry and conceals his guilt. **134.** Since however we are

bidden not to pay lip-service to God (*Mt* 15.8 = *Is* 29.13),[74] and true religion is not judged by the sound of a word, but the Son must first be believed in by the heart for justification, and then be confessed by the mouth for salvation (*Rom* 10.10), and since those who say he is not God,[75] though they confess him as Lord with the mouth, have become corrupt and abominable, as the prophecy says (*Ps* 13.1/14.1; 52.2/53.1), for that reason I say we must look to the intended meaning of those who propose statements of faith, and not be enticed by the words. **135.** If in speaking of the Son the meaning does not point by that term to a thing created, it is ours and not that of our adversaries; if anyone gives the name Son to what is created, he will be classed among idolaters. They once called Dagon and Bel and the Dragon 'god', but they were not therefore worshipping God. God is not wood and bronze and beast.

§§136–150 Eunomius alleges 'variation' between Son and Father

136. What need is there for guess-work in exposing by our argument the concealed deception, and possibly to give occasion for our hearers to think we are attributing these things falsely to our opponents? You can see how he openly parades his blasphemy before us, hiding his guile with no disguise, but flaunting his evils in uninhibited speech. **137.** The text runs thus:

> For our part, finding nothing else besides the being of the Son receiving
> [p. 97] begetting, we think we should apply | the titles to the being itself; otherwise it is idle and merely verbal when we call him Son and Begotten, if we separate these from the essential being. On these bases we also confirm that the beings vary (παρηλλάχθαι) from each other.

138. There is no need, I think, to prove by our own arguments the absurdity in the words: merely reading out what is written is enough to expose the blasphemy. Let us consider it as follows. He says that the beings of the Son and the Father 'vary from each other.' What then is meant by 'varying'? Let us first think about the meaning of the term in itself, so that through the meaning of the word the blasphemy may be more fully revealed. **139.** In common parlance the term 'variance', παραλλαγή, is applied to bodies, when because of paralysis or some other ailment an organ diverges from its natural harmony: because of its contrast to what is healthy we call the divergence in the victim of the disease

74 Jaeger's reference to *Mic* 7.6 is a mistake.

75 In the Psalm(s) these words should be translated 'there is no God.' Gregory takes them differently, of the deity of Christ.

a παραλλαγή. In the case of those who differ morally in virtue and vice, when the dissolute life is contrasted with the pure and decent, or the unjust with the just, or the passionate, aggressive and irascible with the gentle, peaceful and quiet, and in general everything that in comparison with what is better is classed as bad, when it is said to 'vary' (παρηλλάχθαι), because the characteristics of the two do not agree with each other, those of the good, I mean, and of
[p. 98] the bad. | **140.** We also speak of variance (παρηλλάχθαι) between the properties observed in the elements, when they operate in opposition to each other, having a destructive potency towards each other, like hot and cold, dry and wet, or generally whatever is constituted contrary to something else, and we explain the incompatibility by using the term παραλλαγή, and in general everything which in its observed properties does not accord with something else is 'at variance', as health is at variance with disease, life with death, war with peace, virtue with vice, and everything else of a similar sort.

141. Now that we have elucidated these points, we may turn our attention to our wordsmith, and the way he alleges the beings of the Father and the Son 'vary from each other.' What does he mean by this? Is it that the Father by nature is, while the Son is of variant nature? **142.** Or is he explaining divergence from virtue by this term, distinguishing bad from good by the word παραλλαγή, so that we perceive the one being as endowed with goodness, the other with its opposite? Or is he affirming that on the same principle as the opposition of the elements the divine being is also 'at variance', one being against another? Or does he envisage that, as war is to peace and life to death, so there is also conflict against all such opposites in a similar way between the beings, so that they do not come together with each other, because the mixture of opposites has the potency to exhaust the elements mixed? It is like what Wisdom in Proverbs says about such a doctrine, 'Water and fire will never say, "Enough!" '
[p. 99] (*Prov* 30.16),[76] | explaining by this figure the balanced and equal nature of the opposing elements and their neutralizing of each other. Or does he claim to see the variation (παραλλαγή) between those beings as not corresponding to these models? **143.** In that case, let him tell us what else he has in mind. But he will not be able to say, though he may repeat his usual things, that the Son varies from the Father: the absurdity of his words is even more clearly proved by this. For what is there that fits and reconciles so closely and harmoniously one thing to another as the meaning of the relationship of son to father? This is demonstrated by the fact that even if these two words are not used, the one omitted is also implied by the use of the other. Thus the one inheres and fits in

76 So numbered in the Hebrew Bible and in Rahlfs' edition of LXX. Jaeger follows the numbering in other Greek Bibles and gives 24.51.

the other, and both are seen in the one, so that neither of these can be thought of by itself without the other.

144. Variance is surely both in thought and in name the opposite of harmony, as cultivated land relates harmoniously to the straight path, while the crooked does not harmoniously match when compared with the straight, and musicians are accustomed to calling the concord of notes 'harmony', while the false and discordant they call 'disharmony'. So to say 'variant' is the same as to say 'disharmony'. **145.** If therefore the nature of the Only-begotten God varies from the being of the Father, as the heresy argues, it must surely not be in harmony either. The discordant will not be in that with which it can be harmonious. **146.** It is as when there is a single form in the wax and in the carved mould, and when the wax stamped out by it is put back again in the mould, it
[p. 100] fits its own shape to what contains it, finding its own design in the | pattern, penetrating the hollows and admitting the protruding parts of the mould to its own stamped design; whereas if an alien and unknown design is inserted into the carved mould, it resists and spoils its own proper form in attempting to trim its shape to a pattern not its own. **147.** Now, he who 'is in the form of God' (*Phil* 2.6) is not shaped by any stamp other than the Father, since he is the stamp of the Father's being (ὑπόστασις; *Heb* 1.3); for the form of God is surely the same as his being. When he was born in the form of a slave (*Phil* 2.7), he was conformed to the being of a slave, not taking upon himself the mere form divorced from the being, but the essential being is indicated at the same time as the form; just so, surely, the writer who said he was in the form of God indicated the being through the form. **148.** If then he is in the form of God, and being in God is sealed with his glory—as the voice of the Gospel tells us when it says, 'Him has God the Father sealed' (*Jn* 6.27), and hence he who has seen the Son sees the Father (*John* 14.9)—'the image of his goodness' (*Wisd* 7.26), 'the radiance of his glory' (*Heb* 1,3), and whatever else of the same kind testifies that the being of the Son is not out of harmony with the Father, then obviously the blasphemy of our opponents is proved by these words to be unsustainable. **149.** If variant things do not harmonize together, and the one sealed by the Father, revealing in himself the Father and having him in himself, shows in every way how close and harmonious he is, then these things expose forcefully the absurdity of our opponents. Just as the variant was shown to be out of
[p. 101] harmony, so conversely it must | surely be conceded that the harmonious does not vary. **150.** As what is at variance does not harmonize, so the harmonious is not at variance. He who says that the nature of the Only-begotten varies from the good being of the Father, is surely envisaging variation in goodness itself; and as to what variation from good is, 'Beware of villainy, you innocent ones,' says the Proverb (*Prov* 8.5 LXX).

§§151–155 Eunomius contradicts his earlier position by saying that the Son is uniquely begotten, and really means creation

151. I move on in my argument past these things, as patently absurd. Let us now look at what precedes. He says,

> Nothing else is to be found receiving begetting besides the being of the Son.

What does he mean when he says this? Having distinguished two words from each other, and at the same time separated their meanings in his argument, he sets out each one by itself. One word is γέννησις, 'begetting', the other is οὐσία, 'being'. The being, he says, receives begetting, apparently being itself something other than begetting. **152.** If, as he constantly asserts, begetting were the being, so that the two terms were equivalent in meaning, he would not have said that the being 'receives' begetting: it would have been the same as saying that the being receives the being, or the begetting, the begetting, if being were the same as begetting. So he thinks begetting is one thing, the being which receives begetting, another; for what it receives is not the same as what receives. This however is what the skilful logic of our wordsmith says. Whether there is any sense in these statements, is a question the trained judges should examine.

I shall take up the quotation again. **153.** He says that he 'finds nothing else
[p. 102] receiving begetting besides the | being of the Son.' It is however clear to any one with any sort of understanding of words that there is no sense in what he is saying; but it may still be necessary explicitly to set out the blasphemy, which he propounds in this meaningless terminology. He intends, though he is unable to do so because of the weakness of his exposition, to produce in his hearers the idea that the being of the Son is constructed; and he calls the process of construction 'begetting', dressing up the shocking blasphemy in a propitious-sounding word, so that the concession, that the Lord is created, might be readily allowed, if construction is expressed in the term 'begetting'. **154.** He therefore says that the being receives begetting, in order that, as construction is always observed in something which exists (for no one would say that something which did not exist is constructed), so <he might assert>[77] the nature of the Son to be like something constructed, suggesting by the word the thought of making. So he says, 'If it receives this begetting,' intending to indicate something like, 'He would not exist, if he had not been constructed.'

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77 Jaeger marks a lacuna here. The manuscripts reveal various attempts to make sense of the unintelligible text. I have assumed for translation purposes the reading τὴν τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ ἀποφαίνῃ φύσιν, προτείνας . . .

But what else exists in the observed creation, which has *not* been made?[78] Sky, air, land, sea, everything that is, has surely been made; it would not exist, if it had not been made. **155.** Why then does he envisage as something special to the nature of the Only-begotten the concept that into his very being he receives begetting (which is his word for 'construction')?[79]—as if the bumble-bee or gnat received begetting, not into itself, but into something other than
[p. 103] itself. Thus he concedes in what he has written that | the being of the Only-begotten is treated by them just like the meanest parts of creation, and every attempt he makes to prove the alienation of the Son from the Father applies just as much to every single one.[80]

§§156–165 Eunomius should simply deny Christ, and refrain from abuse of Basil

156. What is his need then for this complicated subtlety in arguing the alienation of nature, when he has only to take the short road of denial, by openly renouncing the confession of the name of 'Son', and the proclamation of the Only-begotten God in the churches? They should rather judge the Jewish religion superior to the Christian confession, and confess the Father as sole Creator and Designer, subsuming everything else under the title and thought of creation; among these he should call that work which has pre-eminence over the others a 'made thing' (ποίημα), because he came about by some sort of constructive action, and they should address him as 'First-created' rather than 'Only-begotten God' and 'true Son'. **157.** Once these ideas prevail, there will be much satisfaction that their teachings have reached their goal, when everything has from such a starting-point presumably been brought to its conclusion, that the one who was not begotten and is not Son, but came into being by some action, cannot participate with God in his being. But as long as the

78 The translation makes the best of a troublesome text. The following is suggested as an emendation: If in line 17 of the Greek one were to read δέχεσθαι instead of δέχεται, and in line 19, δὴ instead of δὲ, the two sentences could be taken together as: *So if he says that this* (sc. *the Son's being*) *receives begetting, intending to indicate something like, 'He would not exist, if he had not been constructed,' then what else is there in the observed creation, which has* **not** *been made?'*

79 It seems better to close the bracket and question here, rather than with Jaeger in the next line.

80 The turgid argument of §153–155 seems to mean: *Eunomius claims that the Son is unique in that his being is begotten. But by 'begotten' he actually means 'made' or 'constructed'. Far from distinguishing the Son as unique. that brings him into line with all other created things, down even to insects. If Eunomius says it is the Son's essential being that he is talking about, that is still no different from the generation of bees and gnats.*

words of the Gospels prevail, whereby 'Son', 'Only-begotten', 'from the Father', 'from God' and the like are proclaimed, he will be raving to no purpose, as he deceives himself and those who think like him by such claptrap. **158.** When the title 'Son' proclaims the true relation to the Father, and since John and Paul
[p. 104] and the rest of the chorus of the saints | proclaim these words, genuine and indicating close affinity, who is so stupid that he does not look to these, but <learns> doctrine from[81] the hollow rattle of the sophistries of Eunomius, and thinks Eunomius more true than those who speak mysteries through the Holy Spirit, and carry Christ in themselves? And who is this Eunomius? Whence did he arise to be an instructor of Christians? **159.** We had better pass over these questions, and as far as possible let commitment to our subject soothe our heart, which swells with zeal for the faith against the blasphemers. How can one not be moved to wrath and enmity while our God, our Master, our Lifegiver and our Saviour is trampled on by these little men? **160.** If he were insulting my natural father, or acting in a malicious way towards my benefactor, could I take calmly his malice towards those I love? But if it is the Lord of my soul, who brought it into being from nothing, and redeemed it when it was enslaved, who tasted this present life and prepared the one to come, who calls me to a kingdom and promises a way for us to escape from the condemnation of hell,[82]—these are his lesser claims which I recite, and not yet those which accord with his majesty as universal Lord—if it is he who is worshipped by the whole creation, by things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (*Phil* 2.10), before whom stand the innumerable myriads of heavenly ministers, to whom every thing looks that is governed here and desires what is good,—if this one is exposed for insult to men, for whom it is not enough to make their own the
[p. 105] portion of the apostate, | but who regard it as a failure if they do not also drag down others into the same pit as themselves by writing books, in order that the hand which guides to destruction may not be wanting to the readers, does any one blame us for wrath against these?

161. We must however get back to the sequel. In what comes next he again accuses us of slandering the begetting of the Son by assimilating it to that of human beings. He even mentions what was written by our father on this sub-

81 The reading προσέχειν καὶ of the Vatican manuscript would give the translation, '*but listens also to the hollow rattle…*'; this must be near Gregory's meaning. Jaeger regards it as a conjectural addition to the unintelligible διδασκαλίαν, 'doctrine', found in all manuscripts. Jaeger simply marks a lacuna before διδασκαλίαν. I propose διδασκόμενος διδασκαλίαν, which might be a reminiscence of *Mt* 15.8–9 (cf. *Mk* 7.6–7), itself quoting *Is* 29.13, and have translated accordingly.

82 Literally, Gehenna, as in *Mt* 23.33.

ject, where he says that there are two meanings of the word 'son', the physical constitution through passion and the lawful relation with the one who begot him; the improper and carnal one should not be admitted in theological discussion, the other, inasmuch as it attests the glory of the Only-begotten, should alone be allowed in sublime doctrines.[83] **162.** Who then is it that slanders the begetting of the Son with human notions, the one who excludes the passionate and human from the divine begetting, attaching the Son without passion to his Begetter, or the one who assimilates to the lower creation him who brought the universe into being? Yet this, it seems, is what this new philosophy thinks is intended as slander, to attach the Son to the majesty of the Father; while it is great and highminded to demean him to the rank of the creation which shares our servile status. **163.** What hollow charges! Basil is accused of slandering the Son, when he honours him as the Father is honoured (cf. *Jn* 5.23), and Eunomius champions the honour of the Only-begotten, when he banishes him from the goodness of the Father's nature! Paul once faced such a charge from the Athenians (*Acts* 17.17–21), being accused by them of proclaiming foreign
[p. 106] deities, when he | convicted them of the error of idol-mania about the gods, and he tried to lead them towards the truth by proclaiming resurrection in Jesus. Now too, these are the allegations of the new Stoics and Epicureans against the imitator of Paul; they like to spend time, as the story of the Athenians says, telling and listening to some new thing. **164.** For what thing could be newer than these—the Son of an action, the Father of a created thing, a new God sprung up from nothing, and Good varying from Good? These are they who, by saying that he is not what the nature of his Begetter is, profess to honour him with fitting honours. Is Eunomius ashamed at the form of such honour, if someone says that he does not by nature belong closely with the Father, but is associated with something of another kind? **165.** If he, who assimilates the Lord of creation to the creation, claims to honour him thereby, let him be honoured himself too by being assimilated to what is by nature irrational and without sense. If however sharing with what is inferior is for him something harsh and insulting, why is it an honour for him, 'who rules with his power for ever,' as the prophet says (*Ps* 65/66.7), to be ranked alongside the subordinate and servile nature?

So much for this topic.

83 Referring, not verbatim, to Basil *CE* II 625 C (Jaeger).

[p. 107] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Three**

§§1–11 Created and uncreated being

1. It is perhaps now time to consider with greater care what was said about the words of the Apostle Peter by Eunomius himself and by our father on this subject.[84] If detailed consideration extends the study to great length, the benevolent hearer will surely be indulgent, and not blame us for idle prattle, but will lay the blame on the one who has occasioned it. I beg pardon also for a short introduction to the intended analysis, since this too is perhaps in keeping with our intended goal.

2. The divine word has decreed that none of the things, which have come into being by creation, is to be worshipped by men, so that one learns some such thing from almost every part of the divinely inspired text. Moses, the tablets, the law, the subsequent prophets, the gospels, the teachings of the apostles, all alike forbid veneration of the creation. It would take a long time to set out in order the particulars of the references to this. However, though we may set out a few of the many testimonies from the divinely inspired scripture, our argument surely deserves equal credit, because everything divine is equally valid for revealing the truth, though it be very small. **3.** Ideas of existing things
[p. 108] fall into two classes, the creation | and the uncreated nature. If therefore the present object of our opponents is achieved, so that we say the Son of God is created, then inevitably we either spurn the gospel message and do not worship the Word of God who was in the beginning, because one must not offer worship to the creation, or else, if we respect the gospel miracles, whereby we are led to worship and adore the one revealed by them, we put created and uncreated into the same category, if indeed (as our opponents teach) the created god is also worshipped, when he has by nature no superiority over the rest of creation. If this view prevails, the doctrines of true religion will be turned into general anarchy and ungoverned mob-rule. **4.** When people believe that there is not one single object of worship, but are carried away in their thinking to various divinities, there is nothing to stop their idea of the divinity extending throughout creation; the supposed divinity within creation will become a precedent for the same idea in what is observed next, and that in turn of the one that follows, and as a result of this the error will flow down through everything, as the first falsehood penetrates those adjacent till it reaches the last.

5. To show that I am not making improbable suppositions, I will call as credible testimony to my case the error still prevalent among the Greeks. They were filled with awe in their untrained and infantile thought by the beauties of

84 For Eunomius' charge against Basil, see §§12–25 below.

creation, and did not use the wonder of what they saw as a guide and pointer to
[p. 109] the thought of the transcendent beauty, but | stopped short at what they could comprehend, and adored every part of creation by itself. As a consequence of this, they did not fix their idea of the divine on any single one of the things they saw, but reckoned every visible thing in creation to be divine. **6.** Thus for the Egyptians, as the error had more effect on their thoughts about the things of the mind, the multiple shapes of demons were reckoned as divine beings. Among the Babylonians the invariable revolution of the heavenly sphere[85] was thought to be a god, whom they also called Bêl. In the same way the Greek nonsense made gods individually of the seven[86] that followed, and bowed down to them in their various ways according to the particular account of each in the fiction. Observing that all of these performed their revolutions one inside another, having got the main point wrong, they carried the same error consistently right through to the end. **7.** In addition, the upper air itself, and the atmosphere lying beneath it, the land and the sea and the place below ground, and whatever on earth is serviceable and necessary for human life, none was devoid, they taught, of divine nature, but to every one of them they bowed down, through some one of the conspicuous things in creation enslaving themselves to all the subsequent parts of it; so that if for them too reverence for the created order had been seen as forbidden from the start, they would not have wandered off into the falsehood of polytheism. **8.** In order that we too may not suffer the same fate, we who have learned from the scripture to revere the true Godhead, we have been taught to hold every created thing as outside the divine nature, and only to worship and adore the uncreated nature, the characteristic and token of which is that it has neither beginning nor end of
[p. 110] its existence. | This is what the great Isaiah said on these teachings, speaking of God with his exalted voice, putting this into the mouth of God: 'I am first and I am hereafter, and before me there was no god, and after me shall be no god' (*Is* 44.6). **9.** This great prophet understood more thoroughly than any the mystery of gospel religion: he pointed out that extraordinary sign in the case of the Virgin (*Is* 7.10–14), and announced the good news of the birth of the Child, and clearly attributed to him the title 'Son' (*Is* 9.6). This is he who, having by the Spirit totally grasped within himself the whole truth, in order that the character of the divine nature might be as clear as possible to all, whereby we distinguish what essentially is from what has come to be, puts this into the mouth of God: 'I am first and I am hereafter, and before me there was no god, and after me shall not be.' **10.** Since therefore what is before God is not God,

85 *polos*, originally the pole or axis of the heavens, is here used to mean the whole heaven.

86 Presumably this means the seven planets and their seven concentric spheres.

and what is after God is not God,—for what comes after God is creation, and previous to God is nothing, and nothing is not God; rather what is previous to God is God himself, nowhere delimited in his eternal bliss—since then this spiritual voice which is spoken by the mouth of the prophet is God's, we learn from it the doctrine that the divine nature is single, self-consistent and indivisible, allowing no before or after to apply to it, having nothing in it considered to be either earlier or later, even though it is proclaimed as Trinity. **11.** Since
[p. 111] therefore the voice is God's, whether you attribute the | saying to the Father or to the Son, either way the doctrine of true religion prevails. If the Father says this, he attests that the Son is not after the Father; for if the Son is God, and all that comes after the Father is not God, it is clear that the word bears witness that the Son is in the Father and not after the Father. But if one allows that this saying is the Son's, then 'before me there was none' will be a clear instruction that the one considered to be 'in the Beginning' is comprehended within the eternity of the Beginning. So if anything exists after God, on the basis of this text it will be found to be a creation and not God, for 'what comes after me,' it says, 'is not God.'

§§12–25 The charge of Eunomius against Basil: 'Made Lord and Christ'

12. Now that we have given a preliminary exposition of our theory of existing things, it is perhaps time to consider the passage in question. Peter says to the Jews, 'God has made him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified' (*Acts* 2.36). Our own position is that it is not good religion to apply 'made' to the divinity of the Only-begotten, but to the form of a slave which belonged by divine economy to the time of his presence in the flesh. Those however who twist the passage the opposite way say that, what the Apostle meant by the word 'made', is the begetting of the Son before the ages. **13.** We shall therefore lay out the passage and give both ideas rigorous inspection, and then leave it to our audience to judge the truth. For the opinion of our opponents, Eunomius himself might be a good enough advocate, no mean combatant in these issues, so that if we quote his argument to the letter we shall give a full account of the
[p. 112] case of our adversaries. | For the doctrine we hold we shall ourselves contend to the utmost of our ability, following as faithfully as we are able the earlier expositions of great Basil. **14.** Those of you who sit in judgment for the truth by reading this, 'Judge true judgment' (*Zech* 7.9), not awarding the prize to contention for previously held opinion, but to the truth demonstrated by careful argument. Let the accuser of our position be called first, reading out his words as in a court of law.

15. 'In addition to these statements he also refuses to take "made" as applying to the being of the Son, and is ashamed too of the cross: he attributes to the Apostles what none even of their perverse detractors attempted, and clearly introduces two Christs and two Lords by his own doctrines and arguments. He says that the one whom God made Christ and Lord was not the Word who was in the beginning, but him who emptied himself into the form of a slave and was crucified in weakness. **16.** He writes expressly thus:

> Furthermore, the mind of the Apostle is not presenting to us the existence before time of the Only-begotten, which is the subject of
[p. 113] the present discussion; he is | plainly not talking about the actual being of the divine Word, who was in the beginning with God, but of him who emptied himself in the form of a slave, who was made to conform with the body of our lowliness, and was crucified in weakness. Yet it is something known to anyone who has paid attention to the meaning of the apostolic text, that he is not conveying to us any kind of statement about deity, but presents the description of the Economy. 'God has made him,' he says, 'Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.' By the demonstrative adjective ('this') he manifestly lays stress on his humanity and what is visible to all.

17. Thus says he who substitutes his own thought for the meaning of the Apostles, for it would not be right to say he "paid attention" to it.[87] Otherwise, some one might condemn holy men, chosen to proclaim true religion, for madness so great that their teaching is left open to the damaging imputation of such great folly.[88] People who attribute their own ravings to what is reported of the saints, what confusion are they not capable of? What absurdity are they not full of, when they opine that the man emptied himself into humanity, and that he, who through him humbled himself by obedience in the form of the slave, shared the form of mankind, arguing that he had even earlier assumed that form? **18.** Who, you loosest of all thinkers, possesses the form of a slave, and then assumes the form of a slave? And how could one empty himself to become exactly

87 Eunomius here plays on Basil's 'attention' to the apostolic meaning: not attending to it, but replacing it.

88 This sentence is marked by Jaeger with both a textual crux and a lacuna: ὥστε τὴν ἐκείνων διδασκαλίαν εἰς τοσαύτην ὑπερβολὴν † ἀπολείπουσαν εἰς ὕβριν ***. With no great confidence, I read: ὥστε τὴν ἐκείνων διδασκαλίαν εἰς τοσαύτης ὑπερβολῆς ἀπολείπεσθαι ὕβριν.

what he is? You will not find any possibility of these things, however rash
[p. 114] you are in saying and thinking impossibilities. And must | you not be the most miserable of all people, opining that a man suffered for all mankind, and attributing your own redemption to him? For if it is not the Word who was in the beginning, and who is God, that the blessed Peter speaks of, but the visible one who has emptied himself, as Basil says, and the visible man emptied himself into the form of a slave, and the one who emptied himself into the form of a slave emptied himself into birth as man, then the visible man emptied himself into birth as man. **19.** The very nature of things, however, militates against these ideas, and he himself, who celebrates this Economy with talk of God, notoriously contradicts them, when he says that it was not the visible man, but the Word himself, who was in the beginning and is God, assumed flesh, which in other words is exactly the same as taking the form of a slave. If you think these reasons convincing, give up your error, and stop thinking that the man emptied himself into manhood. **20.** If you are not able to convince doubters, resolve the doubt with another voice and a second opinion. Remember him who said, "Who, existing in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave" (*Phil* 2.6–7). There is no man who ever fitted this description. No saint who ever existed was Only-begotten God made man. That is what it
[p. 115] means to be in the form of God and | take the form of a slave. **21.** If then it is about the one who emptied himself into the form of the slave that the blessed Peter is speaking, and he who existed in the form of God emptied himself into slave's form, and the one who exists in the form of God is he who is Word in the beginning and Only-begotten God, then it is about the one who is in the beginning and is God that blessed Peter is speaking, and he teaches that this is he who was made Lord and Christ. **22.** This however is the war, which Basil wages against himself, and is clearly shown to be neither paying attention himself to the meaning of the Apostles, nor following the logic of his own assertions. Consequently, he will either become aware of the fallacy, and concede that the Word, who was in the beginning and is God, was made Lord, or else, piling the debatable on the debatable, and standing by these positions, he will strenuously add yet more matters of contention, arguing that there are two Christs and two Lords. For if God the Word who was in the beginning is one, and he who emptied himself and took a slave's form another, and God the Word through whom are all things is Lord, and this Jesus who was crucified after all things were made is also Lord and Christ, then according to him

there are two Lords and Christs. **23.** No argument will excuse him for such conspicuous blasphemy. If any one should defend him by saying that the Word in the beginning and made man are the same, but that it was in terms of his presence in the flesh that he was made Lord and Christ, he
[p. 116] will surely be obliged to say that | before his presence in the flesh the Son was not Lord. For although both Basil and those who disbelieve like him falsely proclaim two Lords and Christs, yet for us there is one Lord and Christ through whom all things were made (cf. *1 Cor* 8.6), who did not become Lord by advancement, but before all creation and before all ages existed as Lord Jesus, by whom are all things, which is what all the saints harmoniously teach us and proclaim as the best of doctrines. **24.** Blessed John teaches that God the Word, through whom all things were made, came to be enfleshed, saying, "And the Word was made flesh" (*Jn* 1.14); and the most admirable Paul, urging his attentive readers to humility, calls him Christ Jesus who existed in the form of God, and humbled himself, and emptied himself into a slave's form, and was humbled unto death, even death on a cross (cf. *Phil* 2.6–8). Again in another place he calls the crucified the Lord of Glory: **25.** "If they had known," he says, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (*1 Cor* 2.8). Much more starkly than this, he calls the Being itself Lord, when he says, "The Lord is the Spirit" (*2 Cor* 3.17). If then the Word in the beginning is Lord because Spirit, and Lord of glory, and it is he that God made Lord and Christ, then it was the Spirit and God the Word that God has made Lord, not some other dreamt up by Basil.

§§26–29 The charges summarized

[p. 117] **26.** Such then is the charge. We ought first, I think, | to summarize briefly each of the accusations, and then correct what he says in our argument, so that the judges of the truth may have in mind the case against us, against which a defence must be made, and we may refute each one of the charges in an orderly and logical fashion. He says that we are ashamed of the cross of Christ; that we insult the saints; that we say that a man emptied himself into becoming man; that we think that before his presence in the flesh the Lord has the form of the slave; that we ascribe the redemption to a man; and that we speak in our teaching of two Christs and Lords, or if not that, then we say that before his passion the Only-begotten was not Christ and Lord. **27.** So that we may avoid this blasphemy, he says that we must confess that the being of the Son was made, on the grounds that even the Apostle Peter confirmed such doctrine with his own voice.

These then are the heads of the charge. All his efforts to abuse us I shall pass over in silence as contributing nothing relevant to the subject. Perhaps such a verbal assault is customary for rhetoricians following some professional principle, invented to add weight to the charge. **28.** So let the sophist use his art of abuse, and let him flourish in what he dreams up against us. As he revels in the assaults at the sports let him cry, 'ravings', let him cry, 'loosest thinkers of all', 'most miserable of all', 'full of confusion and absurdity', and whatever he likes. Let him belittle us as he will, and we shall put up with it. The disgrace to a man of sense is not hearing the insult, but taking notice of what is said. There may perhaps also be some benefit from his expending his effort against
[p. 118] us: it is possible that | while be deploys his evil-speaking tongue against us he will make a truce in his war against God. **29.** So let him be steeped in insults as much as he is able; no one will contradict. If someone emitted a horrible and foul odour because of some bodily disorder or a noxious and disagreeable disease, he would not provoke the healthy person to imitate his misfortune, so that one might choose to avenge the unpleasantness of the one who gives out the stench with an equal evil by contracting disease himself. Our common humanity teaches us to pity, not imitate, such persons. So ignoring whatever of this sort he enthusiastically mingles with his case, mockeries, abuse, vexation and insult, we shall concentrate on his doctrinal argument. Starting at the beginning we shall therefore pause in turn at each of his accusations.

§§30–40a The charge of being ashamed of the cross

30. The first charge is that we are ashamed of the cross of him who allowed himself to suffer the passion. Will he also accuse us of advocating the unlikeness of essential being? The allegation of regarding the cross as shameful would better fit those who take that sort of view. If the dispensation of the passion is believed by both parties alike, but we hold that the God made manifest through the cross ought to be honoured just as the Father is honoured, whereas for the others the passion becomes an obstacle to glorifying the Only-begotten God equally with the Father who begot him, then the charges recoil upon the sophist, and by that of which he thinks he is accusing us, he is publicizing his own impiety against received doctrines. **31.** It is clear that the cause of his deeming the Father superior to the Son and revering him with higher honours,
[p. 119] is that the shame of the cross | does not apply to him; and the reason he insists that the nature of the Son is inferior, is that the disgrace of the cross is referred to him alone, and does not affect the Father. No one should think I say this merely as a consequence of drawing out the meaning of the published text. **32.** As I went on through the whole blasphemy so diligently compiled in the book, in what follows I found this blasphemy clearly set out by him precisely

in these terms. If I may, I will state in the course of my own text what he has written. It runs as follows:

> If he can show (he says) also in the case of the God over all, who is unapproachable light, that he was made, or can be made, flesh, and can submit to authority, obey commands, live under human laws, bear a cross, then let light be said to be equal to light.

33. Who is it then that is ashamed of the cross? Is it the one who even after the passion adores the Son equally with the Father, or the one who even before the passion insults him, not only by ranking him with creation, but also by arguing that he is of a passible nature, and that he would not have come to the experience of his sufferings, if he had not a nature susceptible of such things? **34.** For our part, we say that the body also, in which he accepted the passion, being combined with the divine nature, was by that commingling made into that which the assuming nature is. So far are we from belittling the Only-begotten God, that, whatever of the lower nature was taken up because of his Economy of love towards mankind, we believe it was also changed to something divine and pure. He however, who makes the passion associated with the cross a sign of variance by inferiority of essential being, somehow making the supreme exercise of power, by which he could do even this, into an
[p. 120] indication of weakness, fails to understand | that nothing causes amazement as something unexpected, when it functions within its own nature, but when things go beyond the limits of their nature, more than any they become objects of amazement; to them all attention turns, and every mind strains in wonder at the unexpected. **35.** That is why all the heralds of the word point to the wonder of the mystery in this, that God was manifested in the flesh (*1 Tim* 3.16 *v.l.*), that the Word was made flesh (*Jn* 1.14), that the Light shone in the darkness (*Jn* 1.5), that Life tasted death (*Heb* 2.9); all such things the heralds proclaim, and by them the wonder abounds at him who revealed his superlative power by what went beyond his own nature. **36.** Nevertheless, though it may please them to be insulting because of this, and to separate the Son from equality of honour with the Father because of the dispensation of the cross, we ourselves, as it was handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and servants of the word (*Lk* 1.2), believe through the holy scriptures that he who in the beginning was God, as Baruch says, 'after this was seen on earth and was involved with human beings' (*Bar* 3.38), becoming the price paid for our death, both loosed by his own resurrection the bonds of death, and by himself prepared the way to resurrection for all flesh; sharing the throne and sharing the glory with his own Father, in the day of judgment he will impose

the verdict on those being judged in accordance with the lives they have lived. **37.** That is what we believe concerning the Crucified, and the reason we cease not to exalt him highly to the best of our ability, is that the one who, although because of his ineffable and unapproachable majesty he can be reached by none except himself and his Father and the Holy Spirit, yet was able to descend
[p. 121] even to share our weakness. **38.** They however | propose as a demonstration of the alienation of nature of the Son from the Father, that the Lord was revealed through flesh and cross: they argue that the Father's nature abides purely in impassibility, and is unable to engage in any kind of sharing in the passion, while the Son, because by inferiority he diverges in nature, is not unable to enter into the experience of flesh and death, since the change is not great, but is a sort of transfer to the related and akin from what is like them; for they suppose that as the human is created, so also the nature of the Only-begotten is created. **39.** Who then is properly accused of being ashamed of the cross, the one who imputes to him inferiority, or the one who contends for his superiority? I do not know if the prosecutor, when he so demeans the God made known upon the cross, has listened to the great voice of Paul, and what sort and number of things he tells with his exalted mouth about the cross. He who was able to make known so many and such wonderful things, says, 'May it never be that I boast, save in the cross of Christ' (*Gal* 6.14), and to the Corinthians he says that the word of the cross is the power of God for those being saved (*1 Cor* 1.18). **40.** He writes to the Ephesians, ascribing to the shape of the cross the power to govern and hold together the universe, when he desires them to be lifted up to understand the superlative glory of this power, naming height and breadth and depth and length (*Eph* 3.18–19), applying particular names to each of the limbs that are deemed to form the shape of the cross; thus he calls the upper
[p. 122] part 'height', and what lies below the crossing, 'depth', while he | indicates the transverse limbs on either side by the terms 'length' and 'breadth'; this is in order that the great mystery may be revealed thereby, that things in heaven and things under the earth and all the furthest of beings are governed and held together by him who demonstrated this ineffable and vast power in the form of the cross.

§§40b–46 The charge of insulting the saints

I do not think it is necessary to contest these allegations any further, deeming it excessive to expend effort on refuting deceit, while demonstrating the truth in few words. Let us therefore proceed in our argument to another charge. **41.** He alleges that we insult the saints. But if he has heard them, let him spell out the words of the verbal abuse. If he says that we spoke them to others, let him prove the charge by calling the witnesses. If he is proving it from what we have

written, let him read out the words, and we will admit our guilt. But he will not be able to produce anything of the kind. What we have written is published for any who wish to examine. If however it was not said to him, nor did he hear it from others, nor has he proof from what is written, then the one who answers these charges should in my view be silent: **42.** the proper response to an unsubstantiated accusation is surely silence. Peter the Apostle says, 'God has made Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified' (*Acts* 2.36). Having learnt this from him, we assert that there is a single focus of the whole combination of words in the passage, the cross itself, the name of the man and the demonstrative term:[89] the text of scripture says that two things have been done to a single person, the passion by the Jews, the honour by God, not as though there was one who suffered, and another who was honoured by his exaltation.

[p. 123] **43.** Even clearer | is his explanation in what he says next: 'Exalted,' he says, 'by the right hand of God' (*Acts* 2,33). Who then was exalted, the lowly one or the most high? And what is the lowly one, if not the human? What else besides the Deity is the Most High? Yet God needs no exaltation, because he is Most High. So it is the human which the Apostle says was exalted, and he was exalted by being made Lord and Christ. That is why it happened after the passion. It was not therefore the pre-temporal existence of the Lord that the Apostle referred to with the verb 'made', but the change from lowly to high, which was brought about by God's right hand. For by this verb is made plain the mystery of true religion: **44.** He who says, 'Exalted by the right hand of God,' is plainly revealing the ineffable economy of the mystery, that the right hand of God, which makes all that is, which is the Lord through whom all things came to be, and without whom no being came into existence, also itself took up the man united with it to its own exalted place, by that combination making him also what by nature it is itself. That hand is Lord and King, for the King is called 'Christ'; the man he also made to be these things. Just as in the Most High he became highly exalted, so too he became all the other things, in the Immortal, immortal, in the Light, light, in the Indestructible, indestructible, in the Invisible, invisible, in the Christ, Christ, and in the Lord, Lord. **45.** It happens also in nature where physical things are combined, when one part is greatly superior in quantity to the other, that the lesser is, naturally, converted into the predominant. In

[p. 124] the case of the mystic | word we learn quite clearly from the voice of Peter, that the lowliness belongs to the one who was crucified through weakness; and the weakness indicates the flesh, just as we have heard from the Lord (cf. *Mt* 26.41; *Mk* 14.38). **46.** This however because of its commingling with the Good in its immensity and infinity, no longer remained within its own limits

89 Compare Basil's words quoted in §16 above.

and characteristics, but was taken and lifted up by the right hand of God, and became, instead of slave, Lord, instead of a subject, Christ the King, instead of lowly, Most High, instead of man, God. The one then, who pretends to fight against us on behalf of the Apostles, what occasion does he find in our writings as against the saints? Let this charge also be dropped: it is a poor and disreputable thing to give time to false and unproven allegations.

§§47–56a The allegation that Basil makes an already humiliated Christ the subject of the Lord's humiliation

Let us proceed to the more serious accusation. **47.** According to him, we say that

> the man emptied himself into humanity, and that he, who humbled himself by obedience in the form of the slave, shared the form of mankind, and had even earlier assumed this form.[90]

No change has been made in the wording, but we have simply transferred the words from his text to our own. If there is anything of the kind in our writings (and by 'our' I mean those of the Master)[91] no one should accuse the speaker of deception; we shall ourselves bear witness to his total concern for the truth. **48.** If however none of these is in what is written, and his book does not merely make the allegation, but he storms and rages as if the charges were proven, speaking of 'monstrosities', 'ravings', 'full of confusion and fallacy' and the like,
[p. 125] I cannot see what is to be done. | Like those who in the face of the unaccountable rages of the delirious are helpless and cannot think what they should try to do, I too have no idea how to cope with this impossible situation. Our Master says (and again I shall quote word for word), 'it does not convey to us any kind of statement about deity, but presents the description of the Economy.'[92] On the basis of this our accuser says that we argue that 'man was emptied into humanity'. What have these two sets of words to do with each other? If we say the Apostle did not convey to us a kind of statement about deity, but is referring in the text to the economy of the passion, are we for that reason alleged to be saying that a man emptied himself into humanity, that the form of a slave is pre-temporal, and that the man born of Mary is older than his appearing in the flesh? I reckon it unnecessary to waste time on matters readily agreed, when truth itself acquits us of the charge. **50.** The time when one needs to

90 See §17 above.

91 Basil, see §§15–16 above, which Eunomius was commenting upon.

92 Basil in §16 above.

resist accusers, is when one has oneself given occasion to the malicious critic. In cases where there is no peril of ill effects to be detected, the accusation turns out to be not a proof of the allegation of the critic, but of the madness of the accuser.

However, just as, when we were faced with the allegation of being ashamed of the cross, we proved by our critique that the charge recoils against the accuser, so we shall prove that this allegation turns back upon the accusers themselves; it is they, not we, whose doctrine makes the Son change by the economy of the passion from like to like. **51.** Let us consider the things said by both parties, setting them out in summary side by side. Our own position is that the Only-begotten God, having by himself brought the universe into
[p. 126] being, | has total control of the universe in himself, and one of the things made by him was the human race; and when this lapsed into evil, and for this reason came into the destruction of death, by himself he brought it back to immortal life, through the man in whom he made his dwelling, assuming to himself all that is human; and that he mingled his own life-giving power with the mortal and perishable nature, and by combination with himself transformed our deadly state into lively grace and power. **52.** And this, we claim, is the mystery of the Lord in the flesh, that the unchangeable came to be in the changeable, in order that, altering and transforming it from bad to good, he might banish from the race the evil which was involved in the changeable character, using up on himself all that was evil; for our God is a devouring fire (*Heb* 12.29 [*Dt* 4.24]), by which all the fuel of evil is consumed. That is our case. But what does the accuser say?—not that the changeless and uncreated was mingled with what came to be by creation and for this reason had been changed towards evil, but that being himself also created, he came to what was homogeneous and akin to himself, not from a transcendent nature putting on the lowlier nature out of sympathetic love, but becoming just what he was. **53.** In its general reference the word 'creation' is identical for every thing that has come to exist from non-being, while the distinct features of things observed in creation vary one from another in their different characteristics. So if he is created, and man is created, he was, in the words of Eunomius, emptied to become himself, and not to
[p. 127] become lowly from being superior, but | he changed from like to like in honour, except in the feature of being corporeal or incorporeal. **54.** For whom then will the verdict of the honest judges be given, or who will be found guilty of those charges?—the one who says that the created was saved by the uncreated God, or the one who attributes the cause of our salvation to the thing created? For the religiously devout the decision is not hard to discern. One who understands correctly the distinction between created and uncreated, the difference between which is marked by sovereignty and subservience, the uncreated

God reigning in his power for ever (*Ps* 65/66.7), while all that is in creation is subservient, according to the saying of the same prophet, which reads, 'All things are your slaves' (*Ps* 118/119.91). He therefore who has carefully studied these things is surely not unaware who it is that moves the Only-begotten from subservience to subservience. **55.** If, as Paul says, all creation is in slavery (*Rom* 8.21–22), and the being of the Only-begotten is created as Eunomius says, our opponents must surely be arguing by their doctrines, not that the Master was united with slaves, but that a slave was born among slaves. No, to allege that the Lord exists in the form of a slave before he comes in the flesh is the same as alleging that we say the stars are black, the sun murky, the sky flat on the ground, water dry, and all that kind of thing. **56.** One who does not base his argument on what he has actually heard, but fabricates opinions on impulse, should not hesitate to accuse us of such things. It is the same thing for us to be censured for the latter as for the former, since we never held any of them in the first place. One who stipulates that the true Son is in the glory of the Father, how could he disparage the eternal glory of the Only-begotten with the form of a slave?

§§56b–66 The allegation of teaching two Christs and two Lords

[p. 128] Since therefore | our wordsmith is pleased to speak out of malice, and imagines he will seem to be arguing his cases plausibly, it would not be excessive or unprofitable to engage with his unsupported accusations. **57.** The next accusation is equally unreasonable. He accuses us of speaking of 'two Christs and two Lords', without being able to justify the charge from our writings, but arbitrarily using falsehood to suit himself. Since he takes it upon himself to say what he likes, why is he so mean in the lie he produces, arguing that we speak of only two Christs? Let him say arbitrarily, if he likes, that we advocate ten Christs, and ten times that too; let him enlarge the number to thousands, so as to deploy his mendacity most heroically. **58.** Both with two Christs and with more the blasphemy is just the same, and the want of evidence for the charges is also just the same. So if he proves that we speak of two Lords or two Christs, let him win the verdict as if he had convicted us for ten thousands. Yet he claims to convict us from our own writings. Let us therefore look again at the words our Teacher used, on which he presumes to base the charges against us. **59.** The one who says that God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified, 'is not conveying to us any kind of statement about deity,' says Basil, 'but presents the description of the Economy,' 'by the demonstrative adjective ("this") manifestly laying stress on his humanity and what is visible to

all.'[93] That is what stands written. But the two Christs, wheeled in by Eunomius on the strength of this quotation, where do they come from? Is it the fact that he says the demonstrative term lays emphasis on the physical phenomenon,
[p. 129] that | gives proof of the argument for two Christs? **60.** Then he ought also to deny that the Lord was highly exalted by him after his passion, to avoid being guilty of speaking of two Most Highs, since God the Word, who is in the beginning, is Most High, and he who rose from the dead was 'highly exalted' after his passion, as the Apostle tells us (*Phil* 2.9). A choice has certainly to be made between the two: either we say he was highly exalted after the passion, which is the same as saying that he was made Lord and Christ, and face prosecution for impiety by Eunomius, or else evade the charge, and refuse to confess the high exaltation of him who suffered.

61. On this point once again the text of the accuser must come to our aid. We shall therefore quote verbatim what he has written, by which our case is confirmed. It reads like this:

> Blessed John teaches that God the Word, through whom all things were made, came to be enfleshed, saying, "And the Word was made flesh" (*Jn* 1.14).[94]

Did he understand what he was writing, when he added this to his own text? I do not think it same person who both knows the meaning of these words and quarrels with our case. If one looks carefully at the words spoken, he will find no conflict between the things we say and the things our opponent says. **62.** For our part we both see the marks of the fleshly dispensation on their own, and we also recognise the divine power by itself, and for his part, just like us, he says that he who was Word in the beginning was made manifest in the flesh; yet neither any one else, nor he himself, ever accuses him of preaching two
[p. 130] Words, one who was in the beginning and one who was made flesh, for he | surely knows that the Word is the same as the Word appearing in the flesh and as the Word with God. The flesh however is not the same as the godhead until it too is transformed into godhead, so that inevitably some things conform with the divine Word, others with the form of a slave. **63.** If therefore our opponent by such a confession is not accusing himself, because of the duality of Words,[95] why are we maligned for dividing the faith into two Christs, when we say that

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93 See Eunomius' quotation of Basil in §16 above.

94 Eunomius in §24 above.

95 Jaeger would delete the second διά, 'because of', yielding the meaning', . . . not charging himself with a duality of Words'. I have retained the majority reading of manuscripts.

the one who was highly exalted after the passion was he who was made Lord and Christ, by his union with him who is essentially Lord and Christ? We know from what we were taught that the divine nature is always one and the same and constant, whereas of itself the flesh is just what mind and perception take it to be. When it is mingled with the divine however, it no longer remains within its own limits and qualities, but is taken up towards what masters and transcends it, while the meaning of the characteristics of the flesh and of the godhead remains unconfused, as long as each of these is considered by itself. **64.** I mean something like this: the Word was before the ages, the flesh was born in the last times; but no one would reverse this, and say either that the flesh is pretemporal, or that the Word was born recently. The flesh is of a passive nature, while the Word is active; the flesh does not design the existence of things, nor is the godhead able to be passive. In the beginning the Word was with God, in the experience of death is the Man; the human is not eternal, nor the divine mortal. **65.** All the rest are explained in the same way. The human nature does not bring Lazarus to life, nor does the impassible Power weep for
[p. 131] the buried man (cf. *Jn* 11.35–44), but | the weeping belonged to the Man, the life to the real Life. Human poverty does not feed thousands (cf. *Mk* 6.34–44 etc.), nor the almighty Power rush to the fig-tree (cf. *Mk* 11.12–14 etc.). Who is he that is weary from travelling (cf. *Jn* 4.6), and who is he who effortlessly sustains the world by his word (cf. *Heb* 1.3)? What is 'the radiance of the glory' (*Heb* 1.3), and what is it that is pierced by the nails (cf. *Jn* 20.25–27)? **66.** Which form is flogged during the passion, and which is glorified in eternity? These things are obvious, even if one does not explain in words that the beatings belong to the slave in whom the Master is, and the honours to the Master enclosed in the slave, in such a way that by the bond and conjunction both belong to each, as the Master takes to himself the bruises of the slave, and the slave is glorified with the honour of the Master. That is why crucifixion is attributed to the Lord of glory (*1 Cor* 2.8), and every tongue confesses that 'Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father' (*Phil* 2.10).

§§67–69 Humanity assumed by God

67. If there is any need to make the other distinctions in the same way, we should think about what it is that dies, and what abolishes death, about what is renewed and what is emptied. The deity is emptied, so that it may be available to human nature; the human is renewed, becoming divine by mingling with the divine. Just as air is not retained by water, when, forced downwards
[p. 132] by some heavy object, it is taken down into the depth of the water, but | flows upward towards what is akin to it, and the water is often also lifted up by the upward flow of the air, swelling up in the surrounding air with the appearance

of a thin skin,[96] so, when after the passion the true Life contained in the flesh flows back up to its own self, the flesh containing it is borne up with it, driven upwards from corruption to incorruption by the divine immortality. **68.** Just as fire, hidden from sight within the pile of wood, often escapes the view of those who look and even of those who handle it, but when the fire flares up, it becomes apparent, so too when he was in death, he who separated soul and body operated with authority. He who said to his own Father, 'Into your hands I commit my spirit' (*Lk* 23.46), who also (as he says) has power to lay down his life, and has power to take it again (*Jn* 10.18), he is the one, who despised shame among men because he was Lord of glory, as it were concealing the tinder of life in the corporeal nature, in the dispensation of his death rekindled it and made it flare up by the power of his own godhead, warming up what came from the dead. Thus, stirring that small first-fruit of our race into the infinity of the divine power, he made that also just what he himself was: the form of a slave, Lord, the man from Mary, Christ, the one who was crucified in weakness, Life and Power; and he did all those things which in true religion are attributed to God the Word, in the one whom the Word assumed. So these things should not appear to be attributed distinctly to one or the other by itself, but by mingling with the divine, the mortal nature is renewed to match the dominant
[p. 133] element, and shares | the power of the deity, as if one might say that the drop of vinegar mingled with the ocean is made into sea by the mixing, because the natural quality of this liquid no longer remains in the infinity of the dominant element.

69. This is our case, not advocating a number of Christs, as Eunomius alleges, but the union of the man with the divine, and when the mortal is transformed into the immortal, the slave into the Lord, sin into righteousness, the curse into blessing, and the man into Christ, we call it a 'making'. What case is still left for the liars to say that we preach two Christs in our doctrine, if we say that he who exists in the beginning uncreated from the Father, was not 'made' Lord and Christ and Word and God, and if we claim that the blessed Peter was making brief, passing reference to the mystery of the incarnation when he said, in accordance with the foregoing understanding, that what was crucified in weakness, because of the dominance of the power dwelling in him, itself also became that which the one indwelling him both is, and is called, and is itself called Christ and Lord, just as we said.

96 Gregory's general idea here is clear enough: drop a stone in water and some of the water comes up with the bubbles. His words, more literally rendered 'swelling up in the air-like ring with a fine and membranaceous appearance,' are difficult to interpret precisely.

[p. 134] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Four**

§§1–22 The charge of attributing Christ's saving work to a mere man

1. I am conscious of having dwelt longer than I ought on one passage; the logic of the arguments diverted us into this study. We must however take up again the series of charges, so that we pass over unchallenged none of the matters alleged against us. First, if we may, let us consider his allegation that we say an ordinary man effected the salvation of the world. Although in our previous studies we have already given this some slight attention, yet in order that the thought of those who maliciously criticize us may be thoroughly purged, we shall again deal with it briefly. **2.** We ourselves are so far from attributing to an ordinary man the cause of the grace, great and beyond description, that though one were to make Peter and Paul responsible for such a benefit, or a heavenly angel, we would call him accursed on Paul's principle (cf. *Gal* 1.8); for Paul was not crucified for us, nor were we baptized in a human name (cf. *1 Cor* 1.13). It does not follow that, when we confess the saving power of Christ to be greater than human nature, the doctrine of our opponents is now strengthening against the truth.

[p. 135] **3.** Their constant purpose is to argue the | alienation of the being of the Son from that of the Father; and not merely by the difference between the begotten and the unbegotten, but also by setting the passible against the impassible, they strive to demonstrate the dissimilarity of being. This is argued more starkly in the final parts of the book, but is no less apparent also from the things said at present. **4.** If he blames those who refer passion to the human nature, he surely intends to subject the godhead to passion. When the matter is ambivalent and uncertain between them, whether the human or the divine was subject to passion, the decision to reject one surely becomes an argument for the other. If therefore they blame those who regard the passion as concerning the man, they are surely praising those who say that the godhead of the Son is passible, and the conclusion this leads to becomes a commendation of their absurd doctrines. **5.** If on their showing the godhead of the Son suffers, while that of the Father is preserved in total impassibility, then the impassible nature is different in essential being from the one which suffers passion. So, since the statement is quite brief in the extent of its wording, but it provides the principles and presuppositions for the whole perversion of doctrine, it might be right for readers to demand, not brevity in the reply, but certainty. **6.** For our part, then, we neither attribute our salvation to a man, nor do we accept that the pure and divine nature is passible and mortal. Rather, since we must certainly believe the divine utterances, which proclaim the divine Word existing in the beginning (cf. *Jn* 1.1), and that the Word was later made flesh and appeared on

[p. 136] the earth and spent time among mankind (cf. *Bar* 3.38), | we accept in faith the appropriate ideas of the divine voice. **7.** When we hear that he is Light, Power, Righteousness, Life and Truth, and that all things were made by him, we regard all these and similar things as credible, attributing them to the Word as God;[97] when on the other hand we hear of pain, sleep, want, distress, bonds, nails, spear, blood, wounds, burial, tomb, and other such things, even though they are contrary to the previous conclusions, we accept that these are no less credible and true, looking at the flesh, which we have received by faith as accompanying the Word. For just as we may not ascribe the peculiar properties of the flesh to the Word who is in the beginning, so conversely we may not observe the peculiarities of the deity in the fleshly nature. **8.** The teaching of the Gospel about the Lord being a mixture of the exalted and divine with the lowly and human, we attach each kind of idea to one or other of the elements observed in the mystery, as appropriate, the human to the human, the exalted to the Godhead; and we say that, inasmuch as the Son is God, he is of course impassible and pure, but if any suffering is attributed to him in the Gospel, he carried out such an act through the humanity, which was of course susceptible of suffering. **9.** The Godhead truly carries out the salvation of the world through the body it wears, so that the suffering belongs to the flesh, the action to God; and although some drag in the Apostle to support the contrary teaching, when he says, 'God spared not his only Son' (*Rom* 8.32), and, 'God sent his own Son'
[p. 137] (*Rom* 8.3), and all such things as | seem to envisage the divine nature in the economy of the passion, and not the human, nevertheless we shall not lose our grip on sound doctrines, since Paul himself quite plainly explains the mystery of this to us. **10.** He everywhere attests that the dispensation of the passion belongs to the human part of Christ: he says, 'For since by man was death, by man was also resurrection of the dead' (*1 Cor* 15.21); and, 'God, sending his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, condemned sin in the flesh' (*Rom* 8.3)—he says, 'in the flesh,' not 'in the godhead'—; and, 'He was crucified from weakness'—by 'weakness' meaning the flesh—'but lives from power'—by 'power' indicating the divinity (*2 Cor* 13.4); and 'He died by sin,' that is, by his body 'but lives by God', that is, by his godhead (*Rom* 6.10), so that by these arguments it is established that the Man tasted death, while the immortal nature did not admit the suffering of death; finally 'Him who knew no sin,' he says, 'he made into sin for our sake,' once more calling the flesh 'sin' (*2 Cor* 5.21).

11. Though the remark may be incidental, it might not seem altogether irrelevant to include the following point. Because, when Saint Peter says '*made*

97 Jaeger deletes τὸν θεὸν after τὸν λόγον, which means deleting 'as God' in the English. However, while the Greek of the mss may be inelegant, it is not impossible.

him Lord and Christ' (*Acts* 2.36), and again when Paul says to the Hebrews '*made* him priest' (*Heb* 3.1–2), Eunomius seizes on the word 'made' as referring to the pre-temporal existence, and thinks he must for this reason argue that the Lord is something '*made*', he ought then to listen when Paul says, 'Him who knew no sin he *made* into sin for our sake.' **12.** If 'made' applied to the Lord, as found in the Letter to Hebrews and in the sentence of Peter, directs
[p. 138] our thought back to the pre-temporal, it will be right also | for him to refer the sentence here, which says that God *made* him into sin, back to the primary existence (ὑπόστασις) of his being, and to try by this means to demonstrate that he *was made* in the same way as in the other texts, so that he could apply the term '*made*' to the essential being, acting consistently with himself, and see sin in the essential being. If however, because of the shocking absurdity, he is ashamed to do that, and says that the Apostle was referring to the Economy of the last times, when he said 'made him into sin', let him convince himself by the same argument that '*made*' points to the Economy in the other cases too.

13. Let us go back to the point from which we started. It is possible to quote many thousands of other passages from the same scripture with the same tendency. No one should suppose that the divine Apostle is in himself divided between opposing camps, or that for those quarrelling about doctrine he provides through his own words material equally for both cases. Any one carefully scrutinizing it will find that his argument points precisely to one end. There is no ambiguity in his ideas; for everywhere, where he proclaims the mingling of the human with the divine, he nevertheless observes what is distinct in each, so that the human weakness is changed for the better by its communion with the pure, and the divine power does not collapse through the bonding of its nature with the lowly. **14.** So when he says, 'He spared not his own Son' (*Rom* 8.32), he is contrasting the genuine Son with the other sons who have been begotten, elevated, or rejected, those, I mean, who have been by commandment brought to birth, and indicating by the addition of 'his own' his natural
[p. 139] close affinity; and so that no one should | impose the suffering of the cross on the undefiled nature, with other words he quite clearly refutes such an error, calling him 'Mediator' of God and man, and 'man' and 'God', in order that by applying the two to the one, the proper attribution might be made to each, the impassibility to the divine, the dispensation of the passion to the human. **15.** The mind separates what out of love for humanity is taken into unity, but is kept distinct in thought, so that when what is superior and transcends all intellect is proclaimed, he uses the more sublime titles, calling him 'God over all,' 'great God,' 'power of God,' 'Wisdom' and such-like; but when describing in his text the whole experience of sufferings necessarily undertaken because of our frailty, he uses terminology from our side to designate the totality, naming

him Man, not as though making him one in common with the rest of the race by the meaning of the word, but in order that religious truth might be observed in each case, the human glorified by being taken up, and the divine not stained by the condescension, but yielding the human part to sufferings, while achieving through the divine power the resurrection of the one who had suffered. **16.** Thus the experience of death is not referred to the one who participated in the passible nature through uniting the Man with himself, while the sublime and God-befitting names descend upon the Man, so that the one manifested on the cross is called 'Lord of glory', through the commingling of his nature
[p. 140] with the lowly, and as the grace of the names | descends at the same time from the divine to the human. **17.** Consequently he presents him in various different ways, now as having come down from heaven, now as born of a woman; both as God before the ages and as man in the last days. So too the Only-begotten God is believed to be impassible and Christ to be passible, yet the account is not false, when it uses these ideas to attach the appropriate names to both. If we have learned these thoughts from the divinely inspired teaching, how are we attributing the cause of our salvation to an ordinary man? And if we declare that the blessed Peter's word, 'made', envisages not the pre-temporal existence, but the temporal dispensation, what has that got to do with the charge laid? **18.** The great Apostle says that the visible aspect associated with the form of a slave was, by being assumed, 'made' what the one assuming him already was by nature. The same can also be learned from Paul in the Epistle to Hebrews (*Heb* 3.1–2), where he says that he was appointed by God as apostle and high priest, being faithful to the one who 'made' him. In this case also, when he uses the title 'high priest' for the one who with his own blood atoned in priestly fashion for our sins, he is not referring to the primary existence of the Only-begotten when he uses the term 'made', but intending to describe the grace usually designated for the appointment of priests. **19.** For, as Zechariah says (*Zech* 3.1), when Jesus the great High Priest solemnly sacrificed his own lamb, i.e. his own body, and, because the children participated in flesh and blood, himself also shared in blood like them (*Heb* 2.14), it was not in his capacity as one who
[p. 141] was in the beginning, | being Word and God, existing in the form of God, and being equal with God, but rather as the one who had emptied himself in the form of a slave and made offering and sacrifice for us, that he became Priest for many future generations after the order of Melchizedek (*Heb* 5.6). The mystery concerning him was surely understood by him who did not idly address his tract to Hebrews. **20.** In the same way therefore he is in the one place said to have been 'made' Priest and Apostle, and in the other, Lord and Christ, in the one case for his intervention (οἰκονομία) on our behalf, in the other because of the mutation and remaking of the human into divinity: the apostle calls the

remaking 'making'. The deceit of our opponents is thus exposed, as they insolently seize on the terms which describe the Economy and apply them to the pretemporal existence. It was not like this that we learned from the Apostle to know Christ in the present and the past: Paul said, 'Even if we once knew Christ in a fleshly way, yet we know him so no more' (*2 Cor* 5.16), implying that one kind of knowledge points to the temporal dispensation, the other to his eternal existence. Our defence against the charges is therefore briefly set out: we do not reckon there are two Christs or Lords; we are not ashamed of the cross; we do not think that an ordinary man suffered for the world; and we do not of course apply 'made' to the construction of the essential being. **21.** The case for our thought gets no small support from the prosecutor himself, when in the course of his abusive tirade against us he states:

> This however is the war which Basil wages against himself, and is clearly
> [p. 142] shown to be neither | paying attention himself to the meaning of the Apostles, nor following the logic of his own assertions. Consequently, he will either be aware of the fallacy, and concede that the Word, who was in the beginning and is God, was made Lord, or else pile the debatable on the debatable.[98]

That is our case, and is what Eunomius says too, when he says of the Word who was in the beginning, and was God, that he was made Lord. **22.** For being just what he was, God, Word, Life and Light, Grace and Truth, Lord and Christ, and every other sublime title, in the Man he took to himself, who was none of these things, he became all the other things which the Word was, and among the others both Christ and Lord, as Peter teaches and Eunomius concedes; the godhead did not obtain this by promotion, but every sublime merit is thought of as in the divine nature. Thus he is made Lord and Christ, not by arriving at godhead through the acquisition of a benefit—for the nature of godhead is recognized as being in no want of any good—but by bringing the human to participate in the godhead, which is what is meant by 'Christ' and 'Lord'.

§§23–35a Some change is envisaged in the Incarnation, but not passibility

23. That is enough on that topic. The slanderous accusation however made against our doctrine by Eunomius, that Christ is emptied into himself, has already been sufficiently considered in what has been said: it was proved then that he is imposing his own blasphemy on our doctrine. It is not the one

98 This is part of the longer passage quoted above at III.3 §22.

who confesses that the immutable nature takes on the created and mortal,
[p. 143] that speaks of the conversion of like into like, but the one who | envisages no change of state from the majestic nature to the lowlier. If, as they say, he is created, and the man too is created, we are surely robbed of the miracle, and there is nothing remarkable in the message, since the very creation comes to be in itself.[99] **24.** We however have learned from prophecy 'the change of the right hand of the Most High' (*Ps* 76.11/77.10); the Power that makes the universe is what we call the 'Right Hand of the Father', which means the Lord, not like a part dependent upon the whole, but, while it has its being from the Father, conceived of by itself in its own individuality (ὑπόστασις). We claim that, as far as the definition of his nature is concerned, the Right Hand does not differ from him whose Right Hand he is, nor can any other variation be attributed to it than the fleshly economy. For the God manifested in the flesh was in truth himself the Right Hand of God, seen through the actual flesh by those with clear vision. As the one who did the works of the Father, he was, and was considered to be, the Right Hand of God; but inasmuch as he was robed in the veil of flesh in his visible form, he was perceived as varying from what by nature he was. **25.** That is why he says to Philip (cf. *Jn* 14.9), who was looking only at what varied, 'Look through what varies to the invariable, and if you look at that, you will have seen the Father himself, whom you seek to see; for he who has seen me, has seen, not the one who appears in the variation, but the true me, who am in the Father, his very self, in whom I am, for he will perceive the same stamp of Godhead in us both.' Since we believe that the pure, impassible and uncreated nature has come to be in the passible state of the creation, and since in that we perceive variation, why are we accused of saying that 'he was
[p. 144] emptied into himself', by those who | noisily parade their book against our doctrines? **26.** The communication from one created thing to another is no variation in the Right Hand: to say that the Right Hand of the uncreated Nature is created is exclusively for Eunomius and those who think like him. One who has an eye to look to the truth, will see what he perceives the Most High to be, as the same as what he will also see the Right Hand of the Most High to be, uncreated hand of the uncreated, good of the good, eternal of the eternal, the fact that it is begotten in the Father in no way compromising his eternity. So our accuser forgets himself when he plies us with personal insults.

27. To those who are shocked at the thought of passibility, and on this ground argue for the difference between the essential beings, supposing the Father, because of his transcendent nature, to be incapable of passion, while the Son, because of his inferiority and mutation, is degraded to share subjection to the

99 This appears to mean, 'since a created Son is incarnate in flesh similarly created.'

passions, I would like to add this to what has already been said: nothing is in truth passion, unless it tends to sin, nor would one properly speak of the necessary limitation of nature as passion, if one observed that the composite nature goes along in an orderly and consequential way. For the combination of heterogeneous elements with each other in the construction of our bodies is a composition achieved through harmonizing many dissimilar things. **28.** When in due time the harmony, which binds together the combination of elements, is dissolved, what is composite dissolves once more into its constituents. This is rather an action, and not a passion, of the nature. Properly speaking we call passion only what is contrary to the impassibility of virtue, and we do not believe that the one who bestows salvation upon us also remained without a
[p. 145] share in our nature: he was 'tempted in all things | in the same way without sin' (*Heb* 4.15). **29.** In what is truly passion, which is a disease of the will, he had no part. 'He did no sin,' it says, 'neither was guile found in his mouth' (*1 Pe* 2.22/ *Is* 53.9). Those features of our nature however, which by custom and usage are given the same name, 'passions', those we confess the Lord did share in: birth, nurture and growth, sleep and fatigue, and whatever other bodily stresses the soul by its nature is liable to suffer, since appetite extends the desire of the one in need from the body to the soul; the feeling of pain too, and dread of death, and all that kind of thing, provided it does not lead on to any sin as a consequence. **30.** Observing his power penetrating all things, in sky and air, on earth, and in the sea, and whatever is above the heaven and whatever is below the earth, we believe he pervades all things everywhere, but we do not say that he is any of those things in which he is, for the one who measures out the universe with his all-embracing hand-span is not the sky, nor is the one who grips the circle of the earth, earth, nor water the one who encompasses all the whole liquid element. In just the same way, when he went through what are called the sufferings of the flesh, we do not say that he is passible, but as cause of all existing things, and grasping the universe, and by the indescribable power of his own majesty steering all that moves and keeping firm in its place what stands still; and we say he was born among us to heal the malady of sin, adapting the medical treatment appropriately to the disease (πάθος), as he knew to
[p. 146] be suitable | for the ailing part of the creation, **31.** (and the suitable treatment for the disease was touch), thus also healing it.[100] Yet just because he applies medicine to the ailment, he is not because of that himself reckoned to be diseased (ἐμπάθης = 'passible'). In the case of men in general, usage does not make us say such a thing: we do not say that the one who touches the sick person for

100 For technical reasons Jaeger deleted three words, here translated, 'thus also healing it.' I have thought this correction unnecessary.

healing purposes participates in the infirmity, but we say that he is bestowing the return to health on the sick person, not sharing his infirmity. The disease is not his (Christ's), either, but on the contrary he touches the infirmity. **32.** If then the one who does some good to bodies by his skill is certainly not inactive and infirm, but is spoken of as kind and beneficent and the like, why do they slander the economy on our behalf as mean and degraded, and use it to argue that the being of the Son differs for the worse, because the Father's nature is superior to passions, while that of the Only-begotten is not free from passion? If the object of the fleshly economy was not that the Lord should become passible, but to manifest his human kindness, and there is no doubt that the Father is also kindly towards humanity, then the Father is in the same situation as the Son, if one is willing to observe what the purpose is. **33.** If it was not the Father who effected the dissolution of death, do not be surprised; for he also gave all judgment to the Son, himself judging none (*Jn* 5.22). It was not because he was unable either to save the lost or to judge the sinner that he did these things through the Son, but because through his own Power by which he does
[p. 147] all his works | he did this too; the Son is the Father's Power (*1 Cor* 1.24). Those therefore who are saved through the Son are saved by the Father's Power, and those judged by him undergo judgment by the Father's Righteousness. **34.** For Christ is the Righteousness of God revealed by the Gospel, as the Apostle says (*Rom* 1.17). Whether you look at the whole world, or at the parts of the world which constitute the whole, all these are the Father's works, produced by his Power, and thus the scripture is true in both ways, when it says both that the Father makes all things, and that without the Son no existing thing comes to be; for the activity of the Power points back to him whose Power he is. Since therefore the Son is the Father's Power, all the works of the Son are works of the Father. **35.** That it was not through enfeeblement of nature that he comes to the passion of the Economy, but by the sovereign act of will, can be attested by many thousands of gospel texts, which I shall pass over as being obvious, so that my book may not be inflated with repetition of what is undisputed. If what was done was evil, then not only the Father, but the Son too has room for evil; but if the saving of the lost is good, and what was done was not a passion but an act of kindness, why do you remove the Father from the thanksgiving for our salvation, when through his own Power, which is Christ, he devised the deliverance of human kind from death?

§§35b–52 The claim that Peter's term 'made' applies to the Lord's divine nature

We must get back again to our vehement wordsmith and take up again that intense tirade against us. **36.** He alleges that, by not saying that the essential

being of the Son was made, we contradict the statement of Peter, 'He has made
[p. 148] him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified,' | and is full of complaints and abuse about this, and produces arguments which he thinks will refute our case. Let us therefore examine the strength of his arguments. He says,

> And who, you idlest of all thinkers, possesses the form of a slave, and then assumes the form of a slave?[101]

No persons of sense, we shall reply, would say such a thing, unless they are totally alien to the Christian hope. **37.** You however are those who accuse us of laxity, because we will not agree to call the Creator a creature. If the Holy Spirit does not lie when he says through the prophet, 'All things are your slaves' (*Ps* 118/119.91), and all creation is in slavery, and according to you the Son is created, he must surely be a fellow-slave with everything else, the sharing in creaturehood dragging him down to the sharing of servitude. One who lives as a slave, you will surely clothe in the servile form; for if you confess him to be by nature a slave, you will not be ashamed to attribute servile appearance. **38.** Who is it then, you most sharp-eyed of orators, that changes the Son from one servile form to another form of a slave?—he who attests him uncreated, and thereby demonstrably not a slave, or you, who explicitly claim that the Son is slave of the Father even before he took the form of a slave, and has him as Master? I ask for no other judges: I remit the verdict on these matters to you personally. I do not believe there are any so wanting in respect for the truth
[p. 149] as to oppose for mere audacity what is generally agreed; | for the statement is plain to all, that what is servile by nature is stamped with the marks of servitude: being created is a mark of servitude. Any one who says that, being a slave, he came down into our form, surely it is he that removes the Only-begotten from slavery to slavery.

39. Nevertheless he insists on what he has said, and a little lower (I shall here pass over the intervening passage, which has been slightly considered already) he first abuses us as 'rash in saying and thinking impossibilities', and calls us 'most miserable', then adds:

> For if it is not the Word who was in the beginning, and who is God, that the blessed Peter speaks of, but the visible one who emptied himself, as Basil says, and the visible man emptied himself into the form of a slave, and the one who emptied himself into the form of a slave emptied

101 See III.3 §18 above.

> himself into birth as man, then the visible man emptied himself into birth as man.[102]

40. Perhaps from the mere reading his cunning and folly have been instantly detected by the critical ear of those following the argument of the book. Nevertheless our own criticism of the passage will be briefly added, not so much to refute his ill-informed logical fraud, which for those with ears is refuted by itself, as to avoid any appearance of using the weakness of the case as an excuse for ignoring what is proposed.

Our critique of his case goes as follows. **41.** What are the apostle's words?
[p. 150] 'Be it known,' he says, | 'that God has made him both Lord and Christ.' Then, as though someone has asked on whom this grace was bestowed, he points as if with his finger at the subject: 'This Jesus,' he says, 'whom you crucified.' What does Basil say about this? He says that the demonstrative adjective means that '*this* one who was crucified by them, the hearers, has been made Christ and Lord; 'for you crucified him,' he says, and quite likely those who had demanded his execution were listening to the speech, for the time between the crucifixion and Peter's public address was not long.[103] **42.** What has Eunomius to put forward against this?

> For if it is not the Word who was in the beginning, and who is God, that the blessed Peter speaks of, but the visible one who emptied himself, as Basil says, and the visible man emptied himself into the form of a slave, . . .[104]

—Just a moment! Who says this, that the visible man emptied himself again into the form of a slave? Or who argues that the passion of the cross took place before his fleshly manifestation? There was no cross before the body, nor body before the form of a slave. **43.** The God appears in flesh, and the flesh having revealed the God within it, after the great mystery of death has been fulfilled in it, is transformed into the sublime and divine; by intermingling it became Christ and Lord, transformed and changed into what he was, who had revealed himself in that very flesh. But if that is what we say, this champion of the truth again argues that we are saying that the one indicated upon the cross has been
[p. 151] emptied so as to become another man, | composing his sophistic argument in these words:

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102 The passage quoted here is more fully set out in III.3 §18 above.

103 Explaining Basil's words quoted by Eunomius in III.3 §16 above.

104 A further part of the text of III.3 §18 above.

> If the visible man, (he says) emptied himself into the form of a slave, and the one who emptied himself into the form of a slave emptied himself into birth as man, then the visible man emptied himself into birth as man.[105]

44. How well he remembers his studied purpose! How well he steers his case towards its goal! Basil claims that the Apostle said that the visible Man was made Christ and Lord; but this clever fellow and subtle refuter of texts says, 'If it is not the essential being of him who was in the beginning, that the blessed Peter says was made, <but> the visible one emptied himself into the form of a slave, and the one who emptied himself into the form of a slave emptied himself into birth as man, <then the visible man emptied himself into birth as man> . . . .'[106] **45.**—We are defeated by this insuperable wisdom, Eunomius! It is powerfully proved that the statement of the apostle does not refer to him who was crucified in weakness; from which we learn that, if we believe that it does so, then the visible man again becomes another man, emptied into another human birth. Will you never stop poking fun at matters beyond insolent reach? Will you not blush to abandon respect for the divine mysteries by using such absurd sophistries? Will you not even turn, now at last, and acknowledge that the Only-begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, being Word and King and Lord, and known by every sublime title and concept, has no need to be made anything good, being himself the fullness of all good things, while
[p. 152] the | one who changes becomes what he was not before? **46.** So, just as he who knew no sin is made sin (*2 Cor* 5.21), so that he may take away the sin of the world (*Jn* 1.29), so conversely the flesh, which received the Lord, is made Christ and Lord, which by nature it was not, transformed into it by the mixing. By this we learn that the God would not have appeared in the flesh (*1 Tim* 3.16), if the Word had not been made flesh (*Jn* 1.14), nor would the human flesh he wore have been transformed into the divine, if the visible had not been made Christ and Lord. **47.** Yet they spit upon the ignorance of our proclamation, those who climb upon the being of God by their syllogisms, and want to prove that he who brought all existing things into being by creation is himself also part of the creation, and drag along in support of such an enterprise the words of Peter

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105 Completing his quotation of Eunomius in III.3 §18 above.

106 Jaeger adds the words marked in diamond brackets to what he regards as a repetition of the quotation from Eunomius, defectively copied. It is perhaps better to accept the text unamended, and read Gregory as giving a hasty pastiche to represent Eunomius' view. In contrast to the simple lucidity of Basil's position just summarized, Gregory sees Eunomius as ranting unintelligibly, pseudo-logic.

as an argument for their blasphemy, when he said to the Jews, 'Be it known to all the house of Israel that God has made him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified' (*Acts* 2.36). They put forward this proof that the being of the Only-begotten God is created. **48.** What? Tell me, are the Jews, to whom the word was addressed, pre-temporal? Is the cross ante-mundane? Was Pilate before all creation? Was Jesus first, and after that, Word? Is the flesh older than the godhead? Did Gabriel bring the good news to Mary before the world? Did
[p. 153] the man in Christ not get his beginning by birth under Caesar Augustus, | while God the Word in the beginning is our King before the ages, as the prophecy testifies (*Ps* 73/74.12)? Do not you see what confusion you bring into the discussion when you mix up top and bottom, as the proverb puts it?[107] **49.** It was the fiftieth day after the passion when Peter addressed these words to the Jews, and said, 'This one, whom you crucified, God has made Christ and Lord.' Do you not notice the order of the saying, which words come first and which second? He did not say, 'The one whom God made Lord, you crucified,' but he says, 'The one you crucified, him God made Christ and Lord;' so that from this it is clear that it is not what is before the worlds that Peter means, but what is after the Economy. **50.** Why then do you not see that the whole thought of the passage revolves round the demonstrative, while you make jokes with your juvenile logical tricks, saying that if we believe that the visible one was made Christ and Lord by God, it follows that the Lord must again be emptied into humanity and again undergo birth. What strength is added to the tenet you hold by these arguments? How do these words prove the being of the King of creation to be created? **51.** On the contrary, I would myself say that our adversaries join us in recommending our views, and in his excessive pettifogging our orator, by unawares pushing his case to absurdity, makes those things, by which he attempts to refute his opponents, into weapons in their support. If we ought to believe that the change of status of the Son was from superior to inferior, that only the divine and uncreated nature transcends creation, and that man is created, perhaps his vision will be restored, and he will through
[p. 154] his own argument | align himself with the truth, conceding that the uncreated came to be in the created through love for humanity. **52.** If however he thinks he can prove that the Lord is created by showing that, being God, he shared in human nature, there will be many such texts to be found to argue the same point, likewise providing support for the argument. Because he was Word and God, and afterwards, as the prophet says, he appeared on earth and spent his life among human beings (*Bar* 3.38), he will thereby be proven to be one of the

107 Aristophanes *Equ.* 866, cited by numerous classical and patristic writers (see M. Cassin *ad loc.*).

creatures. But if these matters are far from the questions in debate, the same will surely not be germane to our subject either. Conceptually it is the same to say that the Word existing in the beginning was manifested to men through the flesh, and to say that being in the form of God he took upon himself the form of a slave. If the one of these is useless for arguing the case for the blasphemy, the one remaining must be discarded too.

§§53–64 Eunomius' interpretation of Peter refutes his own case

53. However, he kindly advises us to turn from our error, and shows us the truth for which he himself argues. 'The one who was Word and God in the beginning,' he says, 'him the Apostle Peter teaches to have been made.'[108] If he were just explaining dreams to us, and offering the divination of dream-experiences, there would perhaps be no danger in letting him present his fantastic riddles as he sees fit; but since he claims to be expounding the sacred text, it is no longer safe for us to let him misinterpret the words arbitrarily. What does the scripture say? 'God made Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified.'

[p. 155] **54.** Therefore, since they all come down to the same thing, |—the demonstrative pronoun applied to the one humanly named, the allegation of being guilty of murder, the suffering on the cross,—the meaning must necessarily point to the visible one. His claim is however that Peter says these things, but the object of the verb 'made' is the pre-temporal Being. There may perhaps be no peril in allowing wet-nurses and old women to play games with juveniles, and let them switch the meaning of their dreams as they fancy; but with the divinely inspired text set before us for exposition, the great Apostle forbids us to allow the idle chatter of old women (cf. *1 Tim* 4.7). **55.** When I hear 'cross', I think of the cross, and when I hear mentioned the human name, I see the being indicated by that name. When therefore I learn from Peter that this one has been made Lord and Christ, I do not doubt that he means the one before our eyes, since the saints too agree with one another especially about this part; for just as he says that the crucified has been made Lord, so Paul also says (*Phil* 2.6–10) that he was highly exalted after the passion and resurrection, not exalted insofar as he is God—**56.** for what is exalted above the height of God, so that one could say that God is exalted to it?—but he is saying that the lowly aspect of the human nature is highly exalted, the text indicating, I think, the assimilation and union of the man assumed with the exaltation of the divine nature. This then we believe is what great Peter means too, when he says that the one

108 Jaeger prints this sentence as a quotation. It is rather a summary in Gregory's own words of the argument of Eunomius in III.3 §§15–25, omitting the predicate: '. . . made *Lord and Christ*.'

on the cross has been made Lord, becoming, by reason of his total union with the divine, just what the divinity is.

[p. 156] Even if one did allow him to misinterpret the divine text, even so | the argument would not achieve the goal intended by the heresy. **57.** It may be granted that Peter says of the one who is in the beginning, that 'he made him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified;' for we find that not even so does the blasphemy get any support against the truth. 'God made him Lord and Christ,' he says. To which of the terms should we refer 'made'? To which of the items in the sentence does the verb apply? There are three possibilities, 'this one', 'Lord' and 'Christ': to which of these will he attach the word, 'made'? No one will be so wild against the truth as to say that 'made' does not refer to 'Christ' and 'Lord': when he was whatever he was, he was, says Peter, made Christ and Lord by the Father. **58.** This argument is not mine, but his who does battle in his book. In this very passage, which we have before us for scrutiny, he says in his own words,

> It is about the one who is in the beginning and is God that blessed Peter is speaking, and he teaches that this is he who was made Lord and Christ.[109]

So the one who was whatever he was, Eunomius says, was made Lord and Christ, rather like the story about David, which says that, being son of Jesse and in charge of the sheep, he was anointed king, when the anointing did not at that time make him a man, but retaining the nature he already had, he was changed

[p. 157] from a private citizen into a king. **59.** How then | is the argument advanced by these words, that the essential being of the Son is made, if, as Eunomius says, being in the beginning and being God, God made him also Lord and Christ? Lordship is not a title of the being, but refers to authority, and the title 'Christ' indicates kingship, and the definition of kingship is different from the definition of the nature; and yet these things are what scripture says came to be in the case of the Son of God. We should therefore consider what is more devout and logical: of which is it religiously correct to say that by advancement he shares some exalted status, the God, or the Man? Whose mind is so infantile that he thinks the divinity progresses towards perfection? **60.** It is not unreasonable to think such a thing of the human nature, when the gospel text attests his growth as a human being: 'Jesus advanced,' it says, 'in stature, wisdom and grace' (*Lk* 2.52). Which then is it more reasonable to suppose is meant by the apostle's word, that the God who is in the beginning became Lord by advancement, or that the lowly status of human nature was taken up by its fellowship

109 See the full quotation in III.3 §21 above.

with the divine into the highest rank? The prophet David, too, speaking in the Lord's person, says, 'I was appointed king by him' (*Ps* 2.6), meaning the equivalent of, 'I was made Christ,' **61.** Again, as in words of the Father to the Lord, he says, 'Lord it among your enemies' (*Ps* 109/110.2), meaning the same as,[110] 'Be
[p. 158] made Lord of your enemies.' Therefore, as | the appointment to kingship indicates not the constitution of the being, but advancement to the rank, and the one who commands lording it is not at that point ordering the non-existent to be, but giving one that exists ruling authority to rule the disobedient, so too blessed Peter, speaking of his being made Christ, that is, King of all, included the 'him', to distinguish the idea of the essential being from that of its attributes; for he made him, being what he was, the things stated. **62.** If it were religiously correct in the case of the transcendent nature to say that it has become something by advancement, in the way a king is made from a private citizen, the exalted from the humble, and the master from the slave, it might perhaps be right to relate the saying of Peter to the divine being of the Only-begotten; but since the divinity, whatever it may be believed to be, is always the same, too high for any promotion and incapable of diminution, it is absolutely necessary to apply the thought to the human element. **63.** What God the Word was in the beginning, that he is now and remains for ever, for ever King, for ever Lord, for ever Most High and God, not made into any of these by advancement, but being all that he is said to be by the power of his nature. But the one who is elevated from manhood by assumption to the divine, being one thing and made another, is correctly and truly said to have been made Christ and Lord. From slave he made him Lord, from subordinate, King, and from subject, Christ; and he exalted the lowly one and bestowed on him who possessed humanity the name above every name. **64.** Thus came about that ineffable mixture and combination, as human littleness was mingled with divine greatness. For this reason the great and divine titles are rightly applied to the man, and conversely
[p. 157] the deity gets human titles. He is the same who both | has the supreme name, and with his human name of Jesus is adored by all creation. 'In the name of Jesus,' it says, 'every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father' (cf. *Phil* 2.9–10).

So much for this topic.

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110 So Jaeger's text, following Harder. The ms text means, 'meaning the same as Peter', which is difficult.

[p. 160] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Five**

§§1–16a 'The Lord is the Spirit': Eunomius' interpretation and the true one

Since Eunomius says that the term 'Lord' (Κύριος) applies to the being of the Only-begotten, not his rank, and for this he calls in evidence the words of the Apostle to the Corinthians (*2 Cor* 3.17),[111] 'The Lord is the Spirit', it is perhaps appropriate not to pass this error by, either, without correction. He claims that the term κύριος indicates the essential being, and as proof of this notion brings forward the text quoted. Let us therefore see whether this has anything to do with the matter in hand. 'The Lord,' it says, 'is the Spirit.' The one who expounds scripture as it pleases him calls the lordship 'being', and supposes that by the words quoted he can demonstrate his case. **2.** If what was said by Paul were, 'The Lord is Being,' we too would go along with what he says; but since the divinely inspired scripture says that the Lord is the Spirit, whereas Eunomius says that the lordship is being, I do not know where his argument gets its support from, unless perhaps he further claims that 'spirit' is used in scripture instead of 'being'. Let us investigate then, whether in using the term 'spirit' the Apostle ever means by the word, 'the being'. 'The Spirit itself,' he says, 'bears witness with our spirit' (*Rom* 8.16); 'No one knows the things of the man, except the spirit that is in him' (*1 Cor* 2.11); 'The letter kills, the spirit
[p. 161] makes alive' (*2 Cor* 3.6); | 'If by spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you shall live' (*Rom* 8.13); 'If we live by spirit, let us also walk by spirit' (*Gal* 5.25). No one could count the words of the Apostle on this subject, in which we nowhere find him meaning 'the being' by this term. **3.** He who says, 'The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit,' is referring to none other than the Holy Spirit which is found in the understanding of believers; for to be sure he often calls the mind 'spirit' in his own writings, and when that receives the fellowship of the Spirit, the status of adopted son is bestowed on those who have received it. And as to, 'No one knows the things of the man, except the spirit that is in him,' if 'man' refers to the essential being, and 'spirit' likewise, man is proved by these words to be two beings! **4.** He who says that the letter kills, while the spirit gives life, I do not understand how he can make a contrast between 'being' and 'letter'. Or again, how does Eunomius suppose that, when Paul says we must by spirit slay the practices of the body, he is making the meaning of 'spirit' refer to the being? Living by the spirit and walking by the spirit will also be totally unintelligible, if 'spirit' is interpreted as referring to the being. By what else, if it is not in our being, do all of us who are alive

111 See III.3 §25 above.

participate in life? Furthermore, on this point is the apostle offering us advice to live by 'being', as if he were saying, 'Participate in life for your own sake, and not for others'? If then this interpretation is nowhere to be accepted as correct, why in this place does he again imitate those who enact dreams, and
[p. 162] | insist that 'spirit' be taken in place of 'being', to enable him to draw the logical inference that the word 'Lord' is applied to the essential being?—for if the spirit is being, and the Lord is the Spirit, the Lord is of course found to be the Being. How irresistible the force of the logic! **6.** How is it possible to elude or refute the invincible necessity of these demonstrations? 'The Lord', he says, refers to the Being: why does he argue this? Because the Apostle says, 'The Lord is the Spirit.' What then has this to do with 'being'? He just insists that 'the Spirit' stands for 'the Being'. These are the devices of demonstrative procedures, these are the rules of Aristotelian logic, this is why we are wretched, according to you, we who are uninitiated in this philosophy, and you surely most blessed, who pursue the truth by such a process. Is that how you understand the Apostle, by thinking that the Spirit for him replaces the being of the Only-begotten? **7.** How then will you reconcile it with what follows?—for the meaning is not confined to these words. Having said, 'The Lord is the Spirit,' Paul goes on, 'And where the Spirit of the Lord is, is liberty.' If the Lord is the being, and the Spirit is the being, then what is the being of the being? In your account, the Spirit is one being, and that Spirit is the Lord; he then goes on to speak of another Spirit of the Lord, who is himself the Spirit, which on your interpretation means another being. So according to your account, the Apostle is thinking of nothing but the Being of the Being, when he writes explicitly of the Lord as Spirit and of the Spirit of the Lord.

[p. 163] | **8.** Eunomius may take the text as he pleases. What we ourselves know about these things is as follows. The divinely inspired scripture, as the divine Apostle calls it, is a writing of the Holy Spirit, and its intention is to be helpful to mankind. 'All scripture,' he says, 'is divinely inspired and helpful' (*2 Tim* 3.16). But the helpfulness comes in various shapes and many forms, as the Apostle says, 'for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for education in righteousness.' **9.** The reward of this kind however is not won by those who engage with it superficially, but the divine intention is hidden under the surface of the text, as it were by a screen, as some commandment or story is set before the intelligent student. This is exactly the reason why the Apostle says that those who look to the bodily aspect of scripture have a veil over their hearts, and are unable to see through to the glory of the spiritual law, being restrained by the veil covering the facial aspect of the lawgiver (*2 Cor* 3.13). **10.** Hence he says, 'The letter kills, the spirit gives life' (*2 Cor* 3.6). He is indicating that in many places the literal meaning of what is written, if it is not received with the appropriate

attitude of mind, has the opposite effect to that described as life by the Spirit: the one lays down rules for the perfection of virtue through the total escape of men from passion, while there are parts of the historical texts which include the putting forward of incongruous things, and which are calculated to concur with the natural passions. If one were to follow these literally, the letter
[p. 164] would succeed in teaching death. **11.** Before those who | approach the text in a more corporeal way, he says, there lies the veil over the perceptive organs of the soul, while for those who turn their thought to what is intelligible, with something like a mask stripped off, the glory inhering in the letter is exposed to view. The meaning discovered by the higher kind of exegesis is, he says, sovereign (κύριος),[112] and that is the spirit. 'When he turns to the spirit,' he says, 'the veil is removed; and the sovereign (Lord) is the Spirit' (*2 Cor* 3.16). He says this, contrasting with slavery to the letter the sovereign lordship of the Spirit. **12.** Just as he sets what gives life against what kills, so he contrasts the sovereign with slavery. And to prevent us getting confused in our doctrine of the Holy Spirit, misled by the word κύριος into thinking of the Only-begotten, he therefore secures the argument by reiteration, both calling the Spirit sovereign and naming the Spirit of the Lord, so as to indicate by the rank of sovereignty that his nature is transcendent, and so as not to confuse by his wording that which defines the particular being (the ὑπόστασις). **13.** When he calls him both Lord and Spirit of the Lord, he bids us think of something distinct from the Only-begotten. So also elsewhere he speaks of the 'Spirit of Christ' (*Rom* 8.9), endorsing the self-same term, correctly and mystically read, as it is devoutly held in accordance with the evangelical tradition in the orderly pattern of doctrine. Thus we, 'most wretched of all', initiates of the Apostle, pass over from the letter which kills to the Spirit which gives life, learning from him who was initiated in Paradise into things ineffable (cf. *2 Cor* 12.1–4), that whatever divine scripture says consists of words of the Holy Spirit. For 'rightly the Holy
[p. 165] Spirit prophesied:' **14.** | when he says this to the Jews in Rome he quotes the words of Isaiah (cf. *Acts* 28.25). In Hebrews too he prefixes the Spirit, when he says, 'Therefore the Holy Spirit says', and goes on to quote fully the words of the Psalms attributed to God (*Heb* 3.7). From the Lord himself we learn the same thing, that David is not speaking in his own person, that is in accordance with his human nature, when he recounts heavenly mysteries—for how could any human being know the conversation between the Father and

112 The word κύριος, here translated 'sovereign', would more naturally be translated here as an adjective, 'valid' or 'correct'. But the context requires something approximating to the regular sense of 'Lord'.

the Son?—but when he was in the Spirit, he said that, being also Lord, he spoke to the Lord the words stated. **15.** 'If David,' he says, 'in Spirit calls him Lord, how is he his Son?' (*Mt* 22.43–45). Therefore the God-filled saints are inspired with the power of the Spirit, and the reason every scripture is said to be inspired by God, is that it is the teaching of the divine infusion of breath. If the bodily veil of the words is taken away, what remains is Sovereign and Life and Spirit, in accordance with great Paul and the Gospel saying. For Paul said that, for him who turns from the letter to the Spirit, what is apprehended is no longer the slavery that kills, but a Lord who is the lifegiving Spirit; **16.** and the sublime Gospel says, 'The words which I speak are Spirit and Life' (*Jn* 6.63), being stripped of their bodily veil.

§§18–38 Eunomius on names and beings, and his false attack on Basil

We shall leave it to the peddlers of dreams to think of the Spirit as the being of the Only-begotten, and in view of its great abundance, we shall rather use
[p. 166] their own material, and arm the truth with the enemies' weapons. It is right | for the Egyptian to be pillaged by the Israelites, and to make their wealth our own adornment (cf. *Exod* 12.35–36): **17.** if the being of the Son is called 'spirit', and God is also spirit—for so the Gospel also says (*Jn* 4.24)—then the being of the Father is also surely called 'spirit'. But if it is their singular argument, that things described in a dissimilar way are also dissimilar in nature, it surely implies that things which are similarly spoken of do not differ from each other in nature either. Since then on their own argument the being of the Son and of the Father is called 'spirit', it is thereby clearly demonstrated that there is no difference of essential being.

18. A little later Eunomius says:

> When beings differ, surely the terms used to describe the being are also different; in cases where the word is one and the same, what is indicated by the same term will surely also be one.

So in every way he that 'catches the clever in their guile' (*1 Cor* 3.19) has turned the great labours of our wordsmith and the multitude of sweated labours over his works to make them support our teaching; for if God is called Spirit in the Gospel, and Spirit is argued by Eunomius to be the being of the Only-begotten, there being no difference between the one name and the other, then surely those things indicated by the names will not differ from one another either. **19.** It seems to me right, having refuted this feeble and ineffectual

shadow-boxing, to leave undiscussed what he has written afterwards with allegations against the Master's[113] words. His very statement is sufficient proof
[p. 167] of the vanity of what he has written, | proclaiming by itself its own weakness. To engage in combat with such is like trampling on the dead. **20.** Having quoted with great confidence an expression of the Master, and after preliminary slander and abuse having promised to prove it worthless, he has had the same experience as little children, whose minds are so young and immature and their senses so untrained that it makes their apprehension of physical things wrong; so they will often think that the stars are a little way overhead, and out of childish folly pelt them with bits of gravel when they appear, then when the soil falls down, with noise and laughter they boast to their young friends that their throw had reached the stars themselves. **21.** Such is the man who hurls an infantile missile at the truth: he quotes those brilliant words of the Master, as if they were stars, and from his downtrodden and earth-bound mind throws at them words earthly and insupportable; these words, lifted up just so far that they have nowhere to land, are of their own accord turned back by their own weight.[114] Great Basil's statement runs as follows:

> Yet what sane man would add this to the argument, that where the names are different, the beings in question must also be diverse? Peter, Paul and men in general have different names, but the essential being of them all is one. **22.** Therefore among our very great number we are all the same as each other, and we distinguish one from the other only by the observed properties of each individual. Hence the names too are not indicative of
> [p. 168] the beings, but of the properties which characterize each one. | So when we hear "Peter", our thought does not go from the name to the essential being—by "essential being" (ousia) I am not here referring to the physical substance—but we receive the impression in our mind of the peculiar properties attributed to him.

23. These are the words of the great one. As for him who disputes these statements, the accuracy of his critique of us, the measure of the time he has to indulge in frivolities, one may learn from Eunomius' own account. I do not like to include in my own work the orator's sickening rant, or to advertise

113 Basil is of course meant.

114 In this sentence (1) I have followed the suggestion of M. Cassin, and moved Jaeger's comma to precede αὐτομάτως. (2) I have taken ὅθεν as meaning 'where', rather than its usual 'whence', following Liddell/Scott/Jones s.v. ὅθεν, I.2.

his ignorance and folly among my own words. **24.** He sings the praise of 'meaningful words, which clearly express their subject.' In his own accustomed style he patches together the rags of verbal fragments cast off at crossroads, and once again poor old Isocrates is nibbled at for words and phrases to compile his case, and sometimes even the Hebrew Philo gets the same treatment, contributing fragments for him from his own works. **25.** Even then this much-stitched and multi-coloured piece of verbal embroidery is not finished, but every intellectual assault, every defence, every skilful device collapses of its own accord. It is like what usually happens to bubbles, when, because of a mass of water from above colliding with something, the droplets are borne upwards, and create a swelling spray of foamy bubbles, which as soon as they are generated immediately disperse, leaving no trace of their own mass upon
[p. 169] the waters; such are the inflated thoughts of our wordsmith, | no sooner put forward than obliterated without anyone touching them. **26.** After those irrefutable arguments of his, and his dreamlike philosophy, whereby he says that the divergence of essential beings can be apprehended from the differences between names, as when a foamy mass carried down-stream collides with something solid, so his argument is carried along of its own accord and runs unexpectedly into the truth, and this insubstantial and bubbly mass of lies scatters into nothingness. These are the words he uses:

> Who is so stupid and distant from what constitutes humanity, that in speaking of men he calls one a man, and in contrast calls another a horse?

I would reply to him, 'You rightly call stupid one who makes this mistake about words; and I shall use you as a witness in support of the truth. **27.** If it is utter stupidity to call one person a man and another a horse, when both of them are actually men, it is surely just as mad, when the Father is believed to be God, and the Son, God, to call one created and the other uncreated, since in the one case humanity, and in the other case godhead, does not allow the divergence of name to imply a difference of kind. For what lack of reason is to a human being, so is createdness to godhead, being just as much unable to acquire the same definition as in the previous case. **28.** As it is impossible to attach the same definition to the rational being and to the quadruped, for they are distinct in nature one from another by these characteristics, so too you would not explain created being and uncreated with the same words, since those which apply to
[p. 170] the one being | are not to be found in the other. Just as rationality is not found in the horse, nor the uncleft hoof in man, so neither is godhead in createdness,

nor existence by creation in godhead.[115] But if God, then surely uncreated too, and if created, not God; unless by some metaphorical and customary use of language one applies the mere title of godhead to the creature, just as human names are give to some horses by horsemen. Nevertheless the horse is not a man, even if it is called by a human name, nor is the created thing God, even if some claim for him the title of godhead, bestowing the empty sound with two syllables (θεός). **29.** Therefore, because the heretical argument spontaneously corresponds with the truth, let him be advised by himself to stick with his own, and in no way retract his own words, but really reckon it stupid and demented if someone does not call the reality what it is, but instead of 'man' says 'horse', instead of 'sky', 'sea', and instead 'God', 'creature'.

No one should think it unreasonable to contrast the creation with God, but should look at the prophets and the apostles. **30.** The Prophet says, in the person of the Father, 'My hand made all these things' (*Is* 66.2), using 'hand' to refer figuratively to the power of the Only-begotten; and the Apostle says that all things are from the Father and all things are by the Son (cf. *1 Cor* 8.6). The prophetic Spirit agrees substantially with the apostolic teaching, which itself
[p. 171] also comes about through the Spirit. In the former case, | by saying that all things are the work of the hand of the Supreme, the Prophet distinguishes the nature of the things made from the one who made them, and the one who made them by his own hand is the supreme God, who possesses the hand, and by it produces all things. **31.** In the latter case again, the Apostle makes the same division between beings, attaching all things to the creative cause, but not including among all things that which makes them, in such a way that the difference of nature between the created and the uncreated might be clearly set out, and that the one might be shown to be in its own nature the maker, the other, the made. Therefore, because all things are from God, and the Son is God, the creation is rightly contrasted with the godhead; and since the Only-begotten is something other than the nature of all things, and not even those who oppose the truth resist this, it is equally necessary to separate the creation from the Son,—unless of course the voices of the saints are lying when they testify that all things were made by him.

32. Since the Only-begotten is proclaimed as God in the divine scriptures, Eunomius must consider his own book, and condemn all the folly of dividing up the divine between created and uncreated, just as he would one who

115 I have followed the ms. reading, and assumed that εὑρίσκεται is understood from the previous clause. Jaeger instead adds the word ἐνθεωρεῖται, 'is envisaged'.

divides man into horse and man. He himself says a little further on, after the intervening verbiage,

> The intimate bond of names and things is immutable,

by this statement himself asserting that the true affinity of verbal designations with their object is fixed. **33.** If then the title of godhead is intimately attached to the Only-begotten God, and if, though he may wish to quarrel with us, he
[p. 172] surely agrees that scripture does not lie when it says that | the title of godhead does not clash with his nature when applied to the Only-begotten, he should persuade himself by his own arguments: if 'the intimate bond of names and things is immutable,' and the Lord is called God, one cannot envisage any difference in the idea of godhead as applied to the Son and to the Father, if indeed this designation is common to them both. That is not all, however. Rather, there is a great list of titles which are applied to the Son exactly as to the Father: good, imperishable, just, judge, patient, merciful, eternal, unending, all such titles whose meaning indicates the majesty and power of his nature, where no diminution occurs in the eminence of the idea in any of the titles when it is applied to him. **34.** Such a large number of divine titles he passes over with eyes shut, and sees one thing only, 'begotten' and 'unbegotten', putting his faith in the insignificant and feeble persuasiveness of doctrinal error, which is tossed and swept along by the winds (cf. *Eph* 4.14). He says that,

> No one who has regard for the truth will call any begotten thing unbegotten, or call the supreme God Son or Begotten.

This no longer needs our words to refute it. He does not even cover up his deceit with veils as he usually does, but treats the improper inversion[116] as being equivalent, when he says that neither is any begotten thing[117] called unbegotten, nor is the supreme God named Son or Begotten, making no distinction in what identifies them between the only-begotten godhead of the Son and the rest of the begotten things, but treats as of equal value the separation from God

116 This is a semi-technical use of 'inversion' (ἀναστροφή), a rhetorical term for the repetition of the same idea with change of word-order. Gregory's complaint here is that Eunomius inverts the proposition, but juggles the terms so that 'unbegotten' is identified with 'God'.

117 In this passage 'begotten thing' is used to refer to something created, a common enough usage; Gregory complains that Eunomius makes no distinction between this creative begetting of all things and the divine birth of the Son of God as God.

of all things begotten, without excluding the Son from 'all things'. Then to be
[p. 173] sure, by means of the inversion of improprieties | he openly removes the Son from the divine nature, saying that no begotten thing is called unbegotten, nor God called Son or Begotten, by the contrast plainly revealing how shocking the blasphemy is. **36.** Having distinguished things made from the unbegotten, in the second limb of the inversion it is no longer the Unbegotten, but God he says cannot be called Son or Begotten, showing by his phrases that what is not unbegotten is not God, and that the Only-begotten God is, because he is begotten, as far removed from being God as the unbegotten is from being begotten or from being called begotten. It is not in ignorance of the logical inference that he makes the inversion of the statements incongruous and incoherent, but it is from malice towards the orthodox account that he contrasts godhead with what is begotten, arguing by what he says, that that which is not unbegotten is not God. **37.** What would be the true inference? It would be to say that nothing begotten is unbegotten, and to deduce that if any thing is by nature unbegotten, it cannot be begotten. Such an argument both contains truth, and is far removed from the blasphemy. As it is, by propounding that no thing begotten is unbegotten, and deducing that God is not begotten either, he plainly excludes the Only-begotten from being God, arguing from his not being unbegotten that he is not God either. Do we need any further refutations to demonstrate this alien blasphemy? Is it not enough for this alone to become a placard for the enemy of Christ, who argues by these words that God the Word, who was in the beginning, is not God? **38.** So why should we still wrestle with such people? We do not engage with those who indulge in idol-worship and altar-blood, not
[p. 174] because | we have come to terms with the deadly effect of manic idolatry, but because their disease seems to be too grave for us to cure. So just as the deed itself points the accusing finger at idol-worship, and the evil itself, insolently displayed, anticipates the evidence of prosecutors, so too in this case I think the advocate of pious orthodoxy should be silent in the face of one who openly proclaims his own ungodliness, in the same way that medical science remains unable to act in the case of those in the grip of cancer, because the disease is too strong to be treated.

§§39–49 Eunomius and his strongest argument, from the names of elemental beings

39. However, after the passage discussed he promises to say something even stronger, so in order not to appear to be avoiding contradicting him for fear of his most powerful argument, we will attend to this as well as to the passage discussed. He says:

> If we must set all these aside, and go on to the strongest argument, I would say this, that when all the titles proposed by him as proofs are allowed, our case will appear in no respect less true. If indeed the difference between the words which signify properties reveals the difference between realities, one must surely concede that the difference between essential beings is also simultaneously indicated by the difference between the words which signify the beings. This will be found to apply to every thing: I mean, to beings, actions, colours, shapes, and the other qualities. **40.** Fire and water, which are different essential beings, we refer to with distinct terms; so too air and earth, cold and hot, white and black, triangular and spherical. What need is there to mention the intelligible
> [p. 175] beings, which | the Apostle listed, and made clear by the variety of names the difference of beings?

Who will not be stunned by the irresistible force of this effort? The argument exceeds the promise; the experience is more terrible than the threat. 'I will come,' he says, 'to the strongest argument.' **41.** What is this argument? It is that, since difference of characteristic features, he says, becomes known in the divergence of their names, which indicate the properties, we are apparently obliged to concede that the differences of essential beings are also expressed in the divergences between the names. What then are the titles of the beings from which we learn the difference of nature between the Father and the Son? Fire, he says, and water, air and earth, cold and hot, white and black, triangular and spherical. He has won by these examples, mightily triumphs by the argument! I myself, indeed, do not deny that the total absence of names in common also indicates the difference between their natures. **42.** This one thing, however, he of the sharp and perceptive mind has failed to see, that in this particular case both the Father is God and the Son is God, righteous and imperishable, and every title attributing deity applies equally to the Father and the Son; so that, if the divergence of titles implies the difference between natures, sharing names must surely indicate shared essential being. If one is obliged to allow that the divine being is signified by names, it would be right to attach these high and God-befitting words to his being, rather than the designation 'begotten' and 'unbegotten', since 'good' and 'imperishable', 'just' and 'wise', and the like are intimately attached only to the nature which passes all understand-
[p. 176] ing, whereas | 'begotten' also shares its name with mean things in the lower creation. We call both dog and frog 'begotten' (γεννητόν), and whatever comes into being by generation (γέννησις), and the title 'unbegotten' applies not only to that which exists without a cause, but is also attached to what does not exist.

44. The *Whatsit* is called unbegotten, and so too is the *Twang*,[118] the Minotaur is unbegotten, and so are Cyclops, Scylla and Chimera, not because they exist unbegotten, but because they have never existed at all. If the Son has the more divine names in common with the Father, while names which apply also to the non-existent or to humble things are those in which they differ, I mean 'begotten' and 'unbegotten', Eunomius' strong attack upon us actually adds force to the true doctrine, attesting that there is no difference in nature, because no divergence in names is observable either. If however the essential difference of being rests in 'begotten' and 'unbegotten', and he thinks that, on the analogy of the things described in the examples, the names are related to each other as fire and water are, here again the alarming nature of the blasphemy will be obvious, even if we say nothing. **45.** Fire and water are by nature mutually destructive, and either one, if it gets into the other, is likely to be destroyed by the overwhelming power of the more abundant. If therefore he formulates the distinction between the nature of the Unbegotten and that of the Only-
[p. 177] begotten in that way, then surely | he logically concludes that this destructive opposition also exists in the divergence between essential beings, since their natures would in consequence be incompatible and mutually exclusive, and the one would consume the other, should the two get inside or next to each other.

46. How then is it that the Son is in the Father, and is not destroyed? And how is it that Father, being in the Son, lasts for ever unspent, if indeed the specific effect of fire on water is extended to the relation of begotten to unbegotten, as Eunomius says? Nor does the argument consider what is common to earth and air: the one is stable, weighty, resistant, pressing down and heavy, while the nature of air has contrary features. Similarly white and black are observable by the opposition of the colours, and it is agreed that triangular and spherical are not the same: each is in the definition of its form that which the other is not. **47.** In the case of God the Father and God the Only-begotten Son, I am at a loss as to where the opposition lies. One goodness, wisdom, justice, care, power, imperishability and all things that are of sublime import, are equally applied to both, and in a way each has its force in the other: the Father does all things through the Son, and the Only-begotten, being Power of the Father, performs everything. What gap has to be filled, then, by fire and water in demonstrating

118 *Skindapsos*, translated 'Whatsit', is in the lexicon defined first as 'a four-stringed musical instrument', but chiefly in its secondary meaning of 'a word without meaning, a "what d'ye call it", a "so-and-so" '. *Blityri*, translated 'Twang', is defined as 'The twang of a harp-string,' and hence 'a meaningless word'.

the alienation of being between Father and Son? And what is that mighty and mysterious argument, which is demonstrated by these means? **48.** Yet he calls us 'rash',[119] when we propound the unity of nature and diversity of individual beings (ὑποστάσεων) in Peter and Paul, and says our effort is,

[p. 180] terribly rash if we use material examples | in applying our argument to the question of intelligibles.

The corrector of our failings is quite right; he is quite right to charge us with rashness when we expound the divine by means of material things! **49.** What then will you say about the elements, you who are deliberate and circumspect?—that the earth is immaterial, fire intellectual, water incorporeal, air beyond the grasp of sensation? Is your mind so set on its purpose, so sharp of sight in every direction, so invincible to its opponents as you set out your case, that you cannot see in yourself the very things with which you charge the accused? Or are we to allow you to argue the alienation of being by means of matter, while we ourselves, when we use examples accessible to us to demonstrate the kinship of nature, are rejected?

§§50–60 Attributed names and essential being

50. Peter and Paul however, he says, were named by men, and that is why it also became possible to change their names. But what beings are *not* named by men? I call you as witness for the case. If you take the change of names as a sign that things are named by men, you will surely thereby allow that every name is bestowed on beings by us, from the fact that the same words for things do not prevail universally. **51.** As Paul was formerly Saul and Peter had been Simon, so earth, sky, air, sea and all the parts of creation are not given the same name by all, but are named in one way by the Hebrews, in another by us, and with their different appellations by each of the nations. So if Eunomius' project prevails, when he argues that the reason Peter and Paul were renamed was that their
[p. 179] names were given them by men, then surely | our argument based on similar data prevails too, when it claims that all things are named by us because the words we use for them vary in accordance with the differences between nations.

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119 Eunomius calls Basil and his supporters 'rash' (τολμηροί) at III.3 §18 above, but here the argumentative context appears to be different. Gregory is referring to a different passage of Eunomius. See R. P. Vaggione's reconstruction of the *Apologia apologiae* in *Eunomius. The extant works* (Oxford 1987; OECT), p. 120 n. 24. I have followed Vaggione's suggestion, also adopted by M. Cassin, in attributing more of the following words to Eunomius than does Jaeger.

52. If they are all like that, then surely the begotten and unbegotten are no different, for they also are among the things that are renamed. By transferring the idea of the subject inherent in us into a verbal form we express the thought sometimes with one word, sometimes with another, not making the thing, but indicating what we shall call it. The things, in accordance with the nature they have, stay as they are, but the mind dealing with the realities discloses its idea by whatever words it is capable of; and just as the actual being of Peter is not altered in accordance with the change of his name, so nothing else we can think of is altered when its name is changed. **53.** Hence also we say that the word 'unbegotten' has been applied by us to the true and first Father who is the Cause of the universe, and that no harm is done by applying this predicate to the subject, if we describe the same thing with another word. It is quite possible, instead of saying 'unbegotten', to call him 'First Cause', or 'Father of the Only-begotten', or 'Existing with no cause', and many such things which point to the same meaning. Thus by the case presented in his accusation he strengthens our doctrine, that we learn no name indicating the divine nature. **54.** Rather, that it exists is received teaching, but any power of such a designation, such that by it the ineffable and infinite nature is comprehended, we say either exists not at all, or is quite unknown to us. So let him drop his usual
[p. 180] fables, and explain the words which indicate beings, and split up | the subject-matter to fit the diverse terms. **55.** As long as the word of scripture remains true, that Abraham and Moses did not achieve the knowledge of the name,[120] and that no man has seen God at any time (*Jn* 1.18), and no man has seen him, nor can see (cf. *Ex* 33.20; 1 *Tim* 6.16), and that the light around him is unapproachable (*1 Tim* 6.16) and there is no end to his greatness (*Ps* 144/145.3)—as long as these things are spoken among us and believed, every statement, which promises comprehension and understanding of the infinite nature through verbal indicators, is like one who thinks he holds together all the sea in the palm of his own hand. What the hollow of the hand is to the whole ocean, all the power of words is to the ineffable and incomprehensible nature.

56. In saying this, we do not deny that the Father exists unbegotten, nor disagree that the Only-begotten God is begotten; indeed, the latter has been begotten, the former has not been begotten. But what the one existing without begetting and the one who is believed to have been begotten are in their nature, we do not learn from the indications that they have been begotten and have not been begotten. When we say that one of them has been, or has not been, begotten, our mind is impressed in two ways by what is said: by the

120 The scripture Gregory refers to is presumably *Ex* 6.3; though that is not totally convincing for Moses (cf. *Ex* 3.6), and not specific enough about Abraham.

demonstrative element in the words we point to the subject, and by 'has been begotten' or 'has not been begotten' we learn what is attributed to the subject, as it is one thing to think about that which is, another to think about what is attributed to that which is. **57.** With every name applied to the divine nature
[p. 181] the 'is' | must surely be understood, as with 'just', 'imperishable', 'immortal' and 'unbegotten', and whatever other term is used; and though this verb may not happen to accompany the word, the meaning of what is spoken and heard certainly depends totally on the 'is', since if this were not added, the designation would refer to nothing. As when (since it is better to establish the argument with an example) David said, 'God is a just judge, strong and patient' (*Ps* 7 LXX.11/12), unless the 'is' is understood along with each of the adjectives as they are received in the mind, the list of titles will appear pointless and without substance, resting upon no subject. When 'is' is understood with each of the adjectives, the statements will signify attributes of that which is. **58.** So, just as in saying that he is Judge we recognize through judgement a certain activity associated with him, and through 'is' we turn our mind to the subject, clearly learning thereby not to define the principle of his being by the activity, so that when we say that he is begotten or unbegotten, we divide our thought between two ideas, by 'is' perceiving the subject, and by 'begotten' or 'unbegotten' apprehending what attaches to the subject. **59.** Therefore, just as, when we are informed by David that God is a Judge or very patient, it is not the being of God that we learn, but one of the things observed about him, so also in this case, when we hear he has not been begotten, we do not know the actual subject through the negative word, but are led to understand what we must *not* think about the subject, while what he is in his essential being remains no less
[p. 182] obscure; so also scripture | predicates all other divine names of that which is,[121] but that which is in itself, it reports to Moses to be unnamed. He therefore who would lay bare the nature of that which is, should not narrate things *about* that which is, but by what he says make that nature itself plain to us. **60.** Every title you can utter is about that which is—'good', 'unbegotten', 'imperishable'—it is not itself that. In each of these the 'is' is not absent. Since then this one, who is good, is also unbegotten (as he is), any one who promises to give the definition would be wasting his time talking about the attributes, while keeping silent about the being itself, which he promises to explain in his account. To exist unbegotten is one of the attributes of him who is, but the definition of being is one thing, the definition of the manner of being, another: so far it is unspoken

121 'That which is' in this passage, τὸ ὄν, is Plato's term for the ultimate reality. It of course denotes God, but preserves for argumentative reasons the philosophical neuter gender.

and unexplained in what has been said.[122] So therefore let him first make clear to us the names of the essential being, and then let him split up the nature to match the divergence of the titles. As long as the matter in question remains unspoken, it is pointless for him to chop logic about its names, since the names do not exist.

§§61–64 Eunomius' view, that ousia *is materialistic, is false*

61. Such then is the 'strongest' hold with which Eunomius grapples the truth, many doctrines being passed over in silence in this part of his writing. It seems to me to be the duty of those, who engage in this armed competition against the enemies of truth, to equip themselves to deal with people however well protected by the plausibility of falsehood, but not to foul their writing with dead and stinking notions. The thought that,

[p. 183] every thing that is united by the thought of *ousia* ('being', 'essence') | is surely corporeal and linked to corruption

(which is what he says in this part),[123] is something I shall gladly pass over as a stench of the dead, since any intelligent person can, I think, see straight away the fatal fragility and failure of the argument. **62.** Does not every one know that there is a vast number of human souls, and that a single essential being subsists in them all, and that the sameness of being (ὁμοούσιον) subsisting in them has nothing to do with bodily corruption? The principle is therefore obvious to any child, that the reason their bodies perish and disappear is not that they are of the same being as each other, but that they have received a composite nature. The idea of composition is one thing, that of community of being, another. So to say that corruptible bodies are of the same being is true, but the converse has no truth, that if something has the same being, it is certainly also perishable; this is demonstrated in the case of souls, which have one being, and corruption does not affect the community of being. **63.** The account we have given of souls would also fit every intelligible existent that is conceived of in the creation. For the names of the supernatural powers listed by Paul do

122 Other understandings of these words are possible, but I take it to reinforce the previous sentence: nowhere in his writings has Eunomius made and kept the distinction between being and attribute, or he would not have insisted that ἀγέννητος connotes the being of God.

123 Eunomius' words here quoted or paraphrased are obscure to commentators. They seem to mean that the idea of a single οὐσία in Father and Son (as in the term ὁμούσιον) implies a sort of corporeality and vulnerability, which is impossible for God.

not, as Eunomius would have it, signify natures divergent from each other, but the meanings given by the titles clearly indicate that he is not presenting in his writing diversities of nature of the heavenly host, but the varied peculiarities of their functions: 'Rulers,' he says, 'and thrones, and authorities, and powers, and lordships' (*Col* 1.16). These names are such that it is immediately obvious
[p. 184] to any one that | the subjects indicated are arranged in accordance with some function. **64.** To rule, to exercise authority, to exercise lordship, to be someone's throne, all these, one who thinks about them would not take to refer to differences of being, since manifestly it is the activity that is indicated by each title. So one who claims that differences of essential being are indicated in the titles collected by Paul deceives himself (*Gal* 6.3), as the Apostle says, not knowing what he is saying or what he is making affirmations about (*1 Tim* 1.7); for the meaning of the words clearly demonstrates that the Apostle recognizes some differences of rank among the intelligible powers: no essential variations between beings are indicated by the titles.

[p. 185] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Six**

§§1–22 A dilemma proposed by the Eunomians, and the orthodox view

1. We have considered Eunomius' 'strong' points. For my part, now that what had the promise of power has been shown by my argument to be feeble and insubstantial, I think one should say nothing about the others, since the refutations of the strong are a powerful refutation also of the rest. Just as happens in war, when the one stronger than the rest falls, the remainder of the army is reckoned of no account by those who have prevailed over the strong one. But one cannot allow silence over the chief point of the blasphemy as it is set out in the subsequent part of the book. The passage of the Only-begotten from not being to being, that horrible and godless doctrine of Eunomius, more abominable than any other impiety, is what he now argues in what follows in his book. **2.** To all those bewitched by this deception, it comes ready on the tongue to say, as an argument that the one who made us and all creation from non-being is himself from non-being,

> If he was, he was not begotten; if he was begotten, he was not,

[p. 186] and | the deceit takes much support from these words. Consequently, as the fainthearted are hard pressed by their superficial plausibility and are led astray into consent to the blasphemy, we must not ignore the 'root of bitterness'

(*Heb* 12.15) in this doctrine; otherwise, as the Apostle says, it might 'spring up and cause trouble.'

I would say however that we should first understand the actual doctrine in itself, apart from any polemic against our opponents, and then come to the examination and refutation of what has been published. **3.** The word of holy scripture suggests one way of knowing true godhead, which Moses is taught by the heavenly voice, when he hears him who said, 'I am he who is' (*Ex* 3.14).[124] We therefore think that that alone should truly be considered divine, which is deemed to be in existence eternally and infinitely, and every thing attributed to it is always the same, without addition or subtraction. So if any one says of God that formerly he was, but now is not, or that he now is, but formerly was not, we judge either statement equally godless. The idea of eternity is cut short by both, being similarly circumscribed at one end or the other by non-existence, whether one attributes previous non-being to that which is, or claims that what is declines into non-being, and nothing relieves the wickedness of the notion of the divinity by shouting about the non-existence of God at the beginning or the end. **4.** That is why we affirm that the argument, that the one who really is, once was not, is a denial and rejection of true godhead. Consider: the one who through light revealed his existence to Moses, named himself as being, when
[p. 187] he said, 'I am he that is' (*Ex* 3.14); and Isaiah, | becoming a kind of instrument for the one who spoke in him, says in the person of him who is, 'I am first and I am hereafter' (*Is* 44.6), thereby making known by each thought the eternity of God; similarly also the voice that came to Manoah indicates by the meaning of his title that the divinity is incomprehensible, when Manoah asks his name, so that when the promise is fulfilled he may glorify the benefactor, and he says to him, 'Why do you ask this? It too is Wonderful' (*Jud* 13.18), so that we might thereby learn that there is one name indicating the nature of the divinity, the wonder of it wordlessly implanted in our mind. **5.** In the same way too great David in his own words makes the same claim, that all creation was brought by him into being, while only God is always and remains always the same, when he says, 'You are the same, and your years shall not fail' (*Ps* 101/102.28, cf. 26). When we hear these and similar things from persons possessed by God, every thing which does not exist from eternity, we leave, as recent and alien to true deity, for the idolaters to worship. **6.** What now is, but formerly was not, is surely recent and not eternal; and Moses calls regard for any recent thing the worship of demons, saying, 'They sacrificed to demons and not to God, gods whom their fathers knew not; new and recent are they come' (*Dt* 32.17). If then

124 The Greek Bible differs from the Hebrew as it is usually understood, e.g. by the traditional English version, 'I am that I am'.

everything recent held in veneration is the cult of demons, and foreign to true
[p. 188] deity, and what now is, but formerly was not, is recent and | not eternal, then of necessity we who have regard to that which is, classify those who put together that which is not with that which is, and say that it once was not, with the worshippers of idols. **7.** Indeed, great John, announcing the Only-begotten God in his own proclamation in every way ensures that his account allows no access to the idea of non-being in connexion with him that is: he says that he was in the beginning, that he was with God, that he was God, that he was Light and that he was for ever Life and Truth and all good things, and that he was never at any time lacking any excellence, he who is the fulness of all good things and is in the bosom of the Father (cf. *Jn* 1.1–4,14–18). **8.** Therefore if Moses rules that it should be for us a sort of mark of true deity that the only thing we know about God is this, that he is, which is the meaning of, 'I am he who is;' and if Isaiah cries out in his proclamation, that that which is, is on every side unbounded, in the case of God seeing that which is as limited neither by beginning nor end, for one who says, 'I am first and I am hereafter,' sets no limit to eternity in either direction, so that looking to the beginning we find no indication of the point from which he exists and after which he did not, and turning our mind to the future do not at some point cut off the progress into eternity of him who is; and if the prophet David forbids an alien or recent god to be worshipped, both of which are among the doctrines of the heresy;[125] **9.** then in these circumstances
[p. 189] | we declare the whole sophistic argument, that the one who truly is, once was not, to be nothing but a perversion of Christianity, and a turning to idolatry. Since the Evangelist by speaking of 'God' has totally excluded non-being from that which is, and by the use of 'was' in the context has carefully eliminated the suggestion of not being, and when he has used the titles 'Only-begotten God', 'Word of God', 'Son of God', 'equal with God', and all such terms, we have in us the conviction, firm and unmoveable, that if the Only-begotten Son is God, we ought to believe him to exist for ever, the God of our faith.[126] **10.** Yet if he is truly God, he surely also exists for ever and is never caught in non-being. For as we have repeatedly said, if he now is, he also surely always was; and if he once was not, he does not now exist at all. But since it is allowed even by the enemies of the truth that the Only-begotten God is Son and abides for ever, we say this: being in the Father, he is not in him in one respect only, but whatever the Father is reckoned to be, in every respect he is that in him. So as being in the Father's

125 Most of the mss. add here: 'by being not eternal the recent is clearly meant, and in separation from the nature of the true God, the alien.' These words are absent in two important manuscripts, and are deleted by Jaeger as an explanatory *scholion*.

126 More literally, 'the God believed-in'.

imperishability, he is imperishable, as being in his goodness, good, as being in his strength, strong, and as being in each one of the supremacies attributed to the Father, he is that, so too in his eternity he is surely eternal. **11.** The Father's eternity, however, is known by his not originating from not being, nor ending in not being. Therefore, the one who has all that is the Father's, and is assigned all the Father's glory, just as in the infinity of the Father he has no 'end of life', so too in the Father's having no beginning he has no 'beginning of days', as the
[p. 190] Apostle says (*Heb* 7.3). Rather, he is both from the Father and | is perceived in the Father's eternity, and in this way is most clearly to be observed the exact replication in the image of him whose image he is. In this respect we find the word is true, when it says, 'He that has seen me, has seen the Father' (*Jn* 14.9). The saying of the Apostle might also best be understood as right and relevant, that the Son is 'the radiance of his glory and the stamp of his substantial reality (ὑπόστασις)' (*Heb* 1.3); for where people are unable to raise up their thinking to the height of divine knowledge by mental speculation, the Apostle uses perceptible phenomena to put in their ears a notion of the truth. **13.** Just as the body of the sun is replicated in the whole disc that surrounds it, and one who sees the disc goes on though what is apparent to think of the substantial reality (ὑπόστασις) of the whole that lies deep within, so, he says, in the greatness of the Son's power the Father's majesty is replicated, in order that whatever knowledge there is of the one may equally be believed of the other. **14.** Furthermore, as the brilliance of light radiates from the whole solar disc (for one part of the disc does not shine while another remains dim), just so the whole glory, which is the Father, radiates all round with the radiance it emits, that is, with the true Light; and as the beam comes from the sun (for there would be no sunbeam if there were no sun), yet the sun is not thought of by itself without its radiated beam, so in communicating the bond and eternity of the existence of the Only-begotten from the Father the Apostle calls the Son 'radiance of glory'.

[p. 191] | **15.** Now that we have explained these things in this way, no one should have any more doubt about how the Only-begotten is believed to be from the Father, and exists eternally, even though at first sight the saying that he is from the Father may not agree with the one attesting his eternity. If more is needed to establish the case, it would be possible to understand the doctrine on these topics from some things which we learn from sense-perception. No one should scorn the inability of speech to find among real things such an image of what we are discussing as will by some analogy or comparison suffice to represent in all points our subject. **16.** What we want to do is persuade those who say that the Father first took thought, and only then arrived at becoming Father, and thus argue the case for later origin; we use whatever examples may be available

to us to shift their thinking towards true religion. For neither does this direct bond force the will of the Father, as though he acquired the Son unintentionally through some necessity of nature, nor does the will separate the Son from the Father, like an interval coming between them; they should neither reject from doctrine the will of his Begetter with regard to the Son, as though it were cramped by the bond of unity between the Son and the Father, nor dissolve the inseparable bond, when will is attributed to the act of generation. **17.** It is a mark of our stubborn and obstinate nature that the possession and the will are often not present with us at the same time, but at first we want to have some-
[p. 192] thing we have not, and | afterwards we get what we wanted to get. With the simple and omnipotent nature all things are perceived as together and simultaneous, both willing the good and possessing what he wills. In the eternal nature the good and the eternal will is envisaged as everlastingly actual, realized and substantial, neither arising at a particular starting-point, nor conceivable without what is willed. **18.** For with God it is impossible either for the good will not to be, or for what is willed not to accompany the purpose, there being no reason why what is right should not be present to the Father, or to impede his having what he wills. Since therefore the Only-begotten God is by nature the Good, or rather beyond every Good, and the Good is not unintended by the Father, this clearly demonstrates that the bond of the Son with the Father is immediate, and also that the will which exists for ever in the good nature is not expelled nor excluded by the inseparable bond.

If any one is listening to the case without malice, I would like to add something else to what has been said. **19.** If (to take an hypothetical example) some one were to give a flame a power of free choice, it would be clear that the flame would wish, along with existing, also to emit light from itself, and having willed it would surely not lack the power, since its natural power would accomplish the purpose with the light at the same time as constituting the flame; for undeniably, if it were granted to it purposely to start the flame, it would envisage the combination of all together, the kindling of the fire, willing
[p. 193] the light, and the light itself, since | the movement of the free will would in no way impede the instant existence of the light. In the same way, just as in the example we have given, if you also grant to the Father the will for good, you will not separate the Son from the Father by that act of will. **20.** It is not reasonable, either, that the will that he should be, should itself become an obstacle to his immediate existence. With the eye, seeing and looking are in one case a function of nature, in the other a deliberate choice, yet the movement of the free will causes no delay in the act of looking in the intended direction. Each of the two is thought of distinctly and by itself, neither becoming any impediment to the existence of the other, but both somehow existing together, the natural

function accompanying the free choice, and the free choice in turn not failed by the natural movement. **21.** So just as perception is naturally inseparable from the eye, and the will to see imposes no delay on actual seeing, but both intends the eye to have sight and is what it intends, so too with that nature, ineffable and beyond all understanding, the idea of all occurs to us simultaneously, the eternal existence of the Father, his purpose concerning the Son, and the Son himself. As John says, he is 'in the beginning' (*Jn* 1.1), and not thought of as after the beginning. **22.** The Father is the Beginning of every thing, but in that Beginning the Son is also proclaimed to be, being by nature just what the Beginning is. The Beginning is God, and the Word who is in the Beginning is
[p. 194] God. Since the Beginning | indicates eternity, John rightly attaches the Word to the Beginning, saying that the Word is 'in' it. I suppose he uses this argument so that 'the Beginning' may not reach the hearer alone by itself, but before it is formed in the mind, the Word, which is in that Beginning, may also be conceived along with it, simultaneously entering the mind of the hearer and reaching the ears together with the Beginning.

§§23–41 Begetting: Eunomius' argument, and the various meanings of the term

23. Now that our doctrine has been thoroughly elucidated in this way, it is perhaps time to set out and consider the contrary case, contrasting it with our own corresponding ideas. His words are these:

> Our statements are two: he says, that before his own begetting the being of the Only-begotten did not exist, and that having been begotten it exists before all things; he[127] proves neither of these statements to be false. He dare not say that he was before his original begetting and constitution, since the nature of the Father and the judgment of the wise refute this. For what wise man could accept a son and begotten person existing before his original begetting, since one who exists without begetting needs no begetting in order to be what he is?

24. Whether it is true when he says that our Master never opposed these contradictions, every one who has studied his writings will know. For my part, since I reckon that refuting his deceit on this matter is a minor exposure of
[p. 195] malice, I shall leave aside | proving that this topic was not left without due consideration by our Master, and so far as possible turn the discussion towards considering the points set out. Two statements, he says, were made in his own

127 Basil is meant.

book. One was that before his own begetting the being of the Only-begotten did not exist, the other, that having been begotten it exists before all things. **25.** However, it has been sufficiently demonstrated in what we have already said, that it was not a new being that was begotten by the Father apart from the being attributed to the Father himself, and there is no need for us, as if the matter had been put to us for the first time, to tackle a blasphemy of this kind. One thing only must be the object of our work, I mean his godless and shocking statement, made quite openly, that God the Word once was not. **26.** Yet since our work has already paid some attention to this blasphemy too, it is perhaps superfluous to argue again points already demonstrated, using similar arguments. That is also why these points have been made in advance, so that, with a truly devout understanding already impressed upon the listeners, the blasphemy of our opponents might be more apparent, when they argue that in the case of the Only-begotten God his non-existence is prior to his existence.

27. It seems[128] to me that it would be right to consider in my work with closer attention to detail the actual meaning of 'begetting' (γέννησις). That this word implies existing from some cause is clear to all, and I think there is no need for dispute about that. Since however there are different explanations of things which have come into existence from a cause, it would, I think, be
[p. 196] proper | that this should be clarified in the argument with a certain logical distinction. The classes in which we understand things deriving from a cause are therefore as follows. **28.** Some are from material and art: such are buildings and other products made from their respective materials, where some skill takes control, achieving what is intended in the design appropriate to the things being made. Some are from material and nature: nature constructs the generation of living things from each other, doing her own work with the material substance in bodies. Some[129] are from material emission, in cases where the original remains as it is, while what flows from it is considered in itself: this applies to the sun and its ray, or a torch and its light, or scents and perfumes and the odour they emit. These, while remaining undiminished in themselves, have each instantly accompanying them the characteristic stuff issuing from them, as the sun has its ray, the torch its light, and the perfumes the sweet smell generated in the vapours produced in them. **29.** There is also another kind of begetting in addition to these, where the cause is immaterial and incorporeal, while the begetting is visible and corporeal. I refer to the word conceived in the mind: the mind is of itself incorporeal, but gives birth to the word

128 This passage §§27–41 reduplicates *Refut. Confess. Eunom.* §§88–97= *GNO* II 348–352.

129 There are minor misprints in this part of Jaeger's text. In line 6 read σκοπὸν, and here for τὸ read τὰ, preceded by a colon.

through perceptible organs. These many varieties of begetting we observe under one general view. **30.** The miraculous works of nature, as it transforms the bodies of certain animals into other kinds, or as by the alteration of some dry things or the decay of seeds or the rotting of wood it produces some living things, or as from the compressed heap of the fire it converts the cold vapour from the flaming brands, trapped underneath, to generate an animal, which is
[p. 197] known as the salamander,—even though | they appear to be outside the definitions given, these nevertheless conform with what we have said. **31.** By means of physical bodies nature produces these various forms of animals, for the particular kind of body, arranged by nature in a particular way, constitutes this or that kind of animal; and this is no other kind of generation than that accomplished by nature and matter. **32.** These kinds of generation, therefore, being apparent to mankind, the kindly dispensation of the Holy Spirit conveys to us the divine mysteries, making accessible to us his teaching about things beyond our understanding. It does the same on other occasions, when it describes the Divinity corporeally, talking about eye, eyelids, ear, fingers, hand, right hand, arm, feet, sandals and the like in connexion with God; none of these can be understood in its literal sense of the divine nature, but by elevating the instruction, through words familiar in human speech, towards what is easy to envisage, it outlines subjects beyond verbal description, as in a process of analogy we are raised up by each of the things said about God to a kind of superior understanding. **33.** So then for the presentation of the indescribable reality (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten it also receives [from the divinely inspired teaching][130] those many kinds of generation, taking from each one just as much as may be devoutly received in forming ideas of God. **34.** Just as the mention of fingers, hand or arm in connexion with God does not suggest to the
[p. 198] mind the structure of bones, or of sinews, flesh and the limb-joints, but | points by such a term to his practical and active power, and by each of the others the corresponding thoughts about God are indicated, without accepting at the same time the corporeal implications of the words, so too it[131] applies to the divine nature the forms of generation considered, but does not apply them in the manner which our ordinary way of thinking understands. **35.** When it speaks of his power of construction, it may call such an activity 'begetting' (γέννησις) because of the need for the word to come down to the low level of our competence, but it does not connote all those things which in our thought

130 Jaeger deletes the bracketed words, because the subject of the sentence ('it') is already 'the kindly dispensation of the Holy Spirit'; see §32. I am not sure Gregory is incapable of the redundancy.

131 Presumably again the 'kindly dispensation of the Holy Spirit' in the text of scripture.

accompany the act of construction: no place, time, preparation of materials, or use of tools; no expenditure of labour on the things being made; rather, in bestowing these things upon us it attributes the making of all things majestically and sublimely to God when it says, 'He spoke, and they were made, he commanded, and they were created' (*Ps* 148.5 LXX). **36.** Again, when it expounds the ineffable origin (ὑπόστασις), beyond description, of the Only-begotten from the Father, because human poverty cannot attain to doctrines beyond word and thought, there also it accommodates to our condition and calls him 'Son', which is a word ordinarily applied by us to things coming to birth by material and natural process. Yet, just as in attributing to God the origin of creation the word does not go on to say of what material it was made, asserting that the power of his will is the material stuff, place, time, and every such thing, so in this case too, in saying 'Son', it rejects all those other things which human
[p. 199] nature associates with earthly birth (γέννησις), I mean passions, | bodily states, the involvement of time, the need for a place, and above all physical matter; without all of these, earthly birth is not achieved by nature. **37.** No such material and temporal thinking being implied by the designation 'Son', the nature alone remains; that is why, in using the word 'Son', what is proper and genuine in referring to the Father is explicitly applied to the Only-begotten; and because such a form of begetting was not sufficient of itself to implant in us the picture of the ineffable origin of the Only-begotten, it includes also another kind of generation to express the acknowledgement of the Son as God, that of physical emission: it speaks of 'radiance of glory' (*Heb* 1.3), 'odour of perfume' (cf. *Cant* 1.3),[132] and 'breath of God' (cf. *Wisd* 7.25), just what in our earlier argumentation we refer to as 'physical emission'. **38.** Nevertheless, just as in our earlier arguments neither the making of the creation nor the connotation of 'Son' carried with it the acceptance of time, matter, place or passion, so in these cases the text clears of any material notion the meaning of 'radiance' and the other things mentioned, and, taking from this form of generation only what is appropriate to the deity, it indicates that by the meaning of this terminology he is thought of as both from him and with him. **39.** 'Breath' does not imply the exhaling of existent matter, nor 'odour' the actual conversion of the quality of the perfume into vapour, nor 'radiance' the pouring out through sunbeams of the substance of the sun. No, one thing alone is made clear in every case, as we
[p. 200] have said, by such a form of generation: | that the one exists from the other, and is thought of as with the other, no interval intervening between the Father and the one derived from him. Since however, through his very great love for

132 For Gregory's use of this verse of the *Song* in Christology and Trinitarian theology, see Friedhelm Mann, *Lexicon Gregorianum* VI, p. 489.

mankind, the grace of the Holy Spirit has provided that from many sources there should be implanted in us divine thoughts about the Only-begotten, he has added the remaining kind of what is classed as generation, that of thought and word. **40.** Sublime John, though, takes great care that no hearer should ever through inattention or want of thought slip into the ordinary understanding of 'word', such that the Son is thought of as a sound emitted by the Father. That is why at the beginning of his proclamation he prepares us to see the Word as possessing[133] being, and possessing a being not alienated or broken off from that from which it comes, but possessing that first and blessed nature itself. He teaches this when he says, 'In the Beginning was the Word,' and 'with[134] God,' and 'God' (*Jn* 1.1),[135] being himself also everything that the Beginning is. **41.** That is the way he sets out his theological language about the eternity of the Only-begotten. Since therefore these kinds of generation, or rather, of things existing from a cause, are known to us in our every-day usage, and are also taken up by holy scripture to teach about transcendent matters, in such a way that each of them is received as is appropriate for presenting concepts of divinity, let him who comes upon our book form a just judgment as to whether any of the allegations of the heresy has any force against the truth.

§§42–54 Eunomius confuses the begetting of the Son with material generative action

42. Once more I shall set out word for word the text itself of my opponent, as follows. He says,

> The things argued by us being twofold, that the being of the Only-
> [p. 201] begotten does not exist before his begetting, and | that it is begotten before all things . . .

What kind of generation is our dogmatician proposing to us? Is it what it is right to think and say about God? And who is so godless as to postulate the previous non-existence of God? **43.** It is surely clear that it is with an eye to this

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133 Greek ἐν, usually translated 'in', is commonly used in that instrumental sense for which English uses 'with' (e.g. 'with a tool'). If this is the correct understanding three times in this sentence, Gregory thinks of the Word as *possessing* being (οὐσία), and affirms that he possesses the same being and nature as that of the Father.

134 The preposition here is πρός, as in *Jn* 1.2, where its sense is that of location: the Word is where God is: 'by', 'at', or 'with' him.

135 Jaeger deletes καί, 'and', which stands in the manuscripts. If it is retained, Gregory appears to be claiming the words which follow as part of John's opening of the Gospel, wrongly.

material origination (γένεσις) that he takes earthly nature to direct his thought about the Only-begotten God; and because a cow, ass or camel does not exist before its birth, he wants to apply also to the case of the Only-begotten that which the course of lower nature enables us to see in the case of animals. Our corporeal theologian does not perceive that, in applying 'only-begotten' to God, by that very term he declares that he has nothing in common with any coming into existence, and is unique. **44.** How could this kind of generation be 'only-begotten', if it shared the meaning and were just the same as other kinds of generation? To attribute exceptionally to him alone that which it is impossible to apply to any other kind of begetting, is exactly and intrinsically what is meant by the title 'Only-begotten'; so that if any part of earthly begetting were also attributed to him, the one assimilated by any of the features of his begetting to the other generated beings could no longer be only-begotten. **45.** For if the same things were said also of him, which are said of the other things coming into being by generation, then the argument changes the meaning of 'only-begotten' into a sort of fraternal relationship. If therefore the meaning of 'only-begotten' signifies what is not mixed or shared with others, we shall accept that none of the things visible in earthly generation applies also to the way the Son has his being from the Father.[136] Yet it is typical of all things that have come into being through generation, that they do not exist before being
[p. 202] generated. So this is alien to the character of the Only-begotten, for whom | the title of 'Only-begotten' attests that nothing in the way of common begetting is added to him. **46.** So let him be persuaded, this materialist thinker and friend of sense-perception, to correct the error of his concepts through the other kind of generation: what will you say, when you hear 'radiance of glory', or 'odour of perfume'? That the radiance did not exist before it was itself generated? But if you say that, you must surely concede that the glory did not exist either, nor the perfume, for it is impossible that the glory should be thought in itself to be blind and dark, or the perfume failing to produce scent. So if the radiance did not exist, then surely neither did the glory; and if there was no odour, that proves that there was no perfume either. **47.** If however these examples taken from scripture alarm any one, as not representing correctly the majesty of the Only-begotten, because neither is the scent in itself the same in being as the perfume, nor the ray as the sun, let the true Word correct his fear: he was 'in the Beginning', and is everything that the Beginning is, and exists

136 More literally, 'applies to the ὑπόστασις of the Son from the Father'. No English word will do for the verbal noun ὑπόστασις, without suggesting some kind of temporal event, which is just what Gregory is trying to avoid.

before the universe, since John announced both that the Word was 'with God', and that 'the Word was God.' **48.** If then the Father is God, and the Son is God, what doubt still remains about the correctness of calling the Son 'God'? By the term 'Son' the affinity of nature is made known, by 'radiance' the close bond and inseparability, and by the title 'God', attached equally to Father and Son, the everlasting equality of honour; the 'stamp', envisaging the whole substan-
[p. 203] tial reality (ὑπόστασις) of the Father, | indicates the totality of his own majesty, and 'the form of God' points to his eternal sameness, because it shows in itself everything by which deity is characterized.

49. So let us again quote Eunomius' book. 'He did not exist, he says, 'before his own begetting.'[137] Let him spell out the divine titles, which are bestowed on the one who (according to Eunomius) once was not. He will then speak of Light and Blessedness, Life, Incorruptibility, Justice, Sanctification, Power, Truth, and the like. One who says that he was not before his begetting must directly proclaim that there was no truth, when he was not, no life, no light, no power, no incorruptibility, nor any other excellent concept. Even more absurd, than these, and more shocking to piety, there was no Radiance, no Stamp. **50.** In saying there was no Radiance, he surely argues at the same time that there is no radiating power either, as is the case, for example, with a lamp. If one mentions the light from the lamp, one shows also that the lamp is shining, and if one says there is no light, one indicates that the source of light is extinguished too. So when the Son is said not to exist, the non-existence also of the Father is in strict logical deduction argued at the same time by these words. **51.** For if they are closely bound together one with the other, in accordance with the apostolic testimony, both the radiance with the glory, and the stamp with the substantial reality (ὑπόστασις), and the Wisdom with God, one
[p. 204] who | says that either of the bonded partners does not exist, by removing the one surely at the same time removes also the remaining one. So if no radiance exists, he holds that the radiating nature does not exist either; and if the stamp does not exist, neither does the replicated reality exist; and if the Wisdom and Power of God do not exist, he surely holds that he who is unthinkable without wisdom and power in himself, does not exist either. **52.** So if the Only-begotten God did not exist before he came to be, as Eunomius says, and Christ is Power of God, and Wisdom of God, and Stamp, and Radiance, neither surely did the Father exist, whose Power and Wisdom and Stamp and Radiance the Son is. For it is not possible to conceive in the mind a substantial reality (ὑπόστασις) which makes no impression, a glory which emits no light, a God without

137 See §42 above.

Wisdom, a Designer with no Hand, a Beginning with no Word, a Father with no Child. All such, whether they are acknowledged or rejected, are manifested jointly, and with the elimination of the one, the one conjoined disappears too. **53.** Therefore, because they argue that the Son was not, he who is the Radiance of the Glory, before he came into existence, and with the non-existence of the Radiance logic eliminates also the eternity of the Glory, and the Glory is the Father, from whom the Only-begotten Radiance has shone forth, let those who excel in philosophy take note that they have exposed themselves as supporters of Epicurean teachings, advocating atheism under the guise of Christianity. **54.** Since two kinds of absurdity are consequently exposed to view, either to say that there is no God at all, or that he does not exist without a beginning, let them decide which of the options on offer they prefer, whether to be called
[p. 205] atheists, or to say that the Father's life had a beginning. Yet | they will doubtless shun being thought of as atheists: so it remains for them to argue that God is not eternal. If however the logic of what has been demonstrated forces this conclusion, where are the complex and subtle transpositions of terms? Where is that irrefutable logic of the syllogisms, which by the distinction of 'begotten' from 'unbegotten' charms old-womanly ears?

§§55–80 Basil defended against the argument from the eternity of creation

55. So much for that. It would be right however not to pass over without consideration what follows. We need not discuss the intervening games, where our skilled orator makes a juvenile display, whether in jest or in earnest, of insults against us, as though he would thereby prevail in the argument. No one will oblige us to distort our view to match those whose eyes are asquint, nor in company with those smitten by demonic disease adopt their bodily contortions, their jumping and falling about. But while we shall feel pity for them, we shall not ourselves abandon our stable condition. **56.** He says, then, directing his actual words at our Master as though doing battle face to face,

> You will be caught by your own feathers.

Our master had said that the good is always present with the God over all, and it is good to be the Father of such a Child; therefore the Father would not wish the good to be absent from him, and wishing it, would not be unable, and being able and willing would be in his intended state, and would always have the Son
[p. 206] because he always wills the good. Such is the thinking to which | the words spoken by our father point. Eunomius however first traduces these arguments,

then to refute those words, puts forward a statement imported from secular philosophy,[138] like this:

> **57.** How would you manage, if someone who has studied such arguments were to say, "If indeed creative design[139] is good and proper for God, why was not what is good and proper present with him without beginning, if indeed God is without beginning?" Ignorance does not prevent this, nor weakness or inexperience in creative design impede, nor all the stuff you have raked together and heaped upon yourself, for it would surely not be reverent to say, "upon God".

If it were possible for the Master himself to answer the question, he would show Eunomius how he would manage, as he demands: he would both reveal the divine mystery by his God-directed speech, and batter the champions of falsehood with refutations. It would become clear to all, how great the difference is between a steward of the mysteries of Christ (cf. *1 Cor* 4.1) and a comedian, or a creator of new and alien doctrines. **58.** However, since the one, in the words of the Apostle, 'being dead, speaks' to God (cf. *Heb* 11.4), while the other publishes this sort of thing as if there were none to reply, although our response may not have the same weight as the voice of the great Basil, we shall nevertheless say this boldly to the questioner: evidence for the truth of what we say in proving ungodly doctrine false, is the case you put forward for the
[p. 207] refutation of our words. | **59.** We make no other allegation beyond this, that you deem the Lord of creation to be no different from the generality of creation, and what you put forward is the case in support of our allegations. If the very thing which you observe in creation must be applied also to the Only-begotten God, our purpose is attained, for the absurdity is completely demonstrated through your own words: it is obvious to every one that we win the argument by truth, and that your concept of the Only-begotten God is the same as that of all other created things.

60. What was the dispute about? Was it not the Only-begotten Son of God, the Designer of all creation, whether he always was, or was later added to the

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138 Though Gregory attributes to Eunomius borrowings from the philosophical debate about the eternity of the universe, Eunomius' words suggest that it was Basil's own terminology that he was using.

139 We have elsewhere used 'Designer' for δημιουργός (*Demiurge*). Here where the act of creation is referred to by the infinitive verb δημιουργεῖν, 'creative design' might be appropriate.

Father? What then does the voice of the Master say about that? He said it is irreverent to believe that what is by nature good is not always present in God; for no reason can be seen why it is plausible for the good thing not to be present with the Good, either through lack of power, or through uncertainty of will. What does he who objects to these words say to this? He says, if you concede that God the Word is believed as from eternity, you concede the same about the works of creative design. **61.** How well he knows how to distinguish in argument between the nature of the works of creative design, and the divine majesty! How well he understands the things proper to each, what it is religiously devout to attribute to God and to creation!

> If, he says, the Designer begins from the time of the designed creation, for it is not possible to indicate the beginning of any other thing that has come to be, except by the time-period proper to it, since time determines the beginnings and ends of things that come to be, **62.** that is why
> [p. 208] (he says) the | Maker of times began from the same sort of beginning of existence.[140]

However, the creation has the ages as its beginning, and what sort of beginning can you conceive for the Maker of the ages? If someone were to say, 'The one in the Gospel,' the Father is what is there meant,[141] and closely bound up together with that is indicated also the confession of the Son: it is impossible for him who 'is in the Father' (as the Lord puts it) (*Jn* 14.10 etc.) to start being in him from some particular point; and if someone were to reply that it is another beginning, and not that one, he would have to give the name by which he indicates such a beginning, if none is acknowledged before the ages were constituted. **63.** We shall not therefore be at all moved from our truly religious idea of the Only-begotten God by this sort of argument, although old wives may applaud the strength of the proposition. We abide by what has been known from the beginning, holding the argument grounded in truth, which says that, whatever the statement of true religion suggests we may say about the Only-begotten God, he has no affinity with the creation, but a great distance separates the characteristics of the one who made all things from those of his works. Even if in other respects there had been anything in common

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140 It is uncertain where the quotation ends. Jaeger ends it earlier than I have done. I have followed *Eunomius The extant works*, ed. R. P. Vaggione, *OECT* 1987, p. 121.

141 The supposed questioner probably alludes to *Jn* 1.1, 'In a (*or*, the) beginning was the Word.' Gregory responds in his usual interpretation of that verse, in which the Beginning is the Father, not a temporal indication.

between the Son and the creation, one surely ought not to say that he is also changed in the manner of his existence; **64.** but if the creation has no part in such things as those which we have learned to attribute to the Son, it is surely necessary to deny that it has anything in common in this respect either. The creation was not 'in the Beginning', nor 'was with God', nor 'was God'; not Life, not Light, not Resurrection, nor any of the other God-befitting names, like Truth, Righteousness, Sanctification, Righteous Judge, Maker of the Universe,
[p. 209] existing before the ages, reigning from age to age and beyond. | Creation is not the Radiance of Glory, not the Stamp of the substance, not the Image of Goodness, not Grace, not Power, not Truth, not Salvation, not Redemption. None at all of the things said in scripture to the glory of the Only-begotten either belongs to or is attributed to the creation, not to mention the sublime words, 'I am in the Father and the Father in me' (*Jn* 14.10), 'He that has seen me has seen the Father' (*Jn* 14.9), and 'No one knows the Son except the Father' (cf. *Mt* 11.27). **65.** If the statement had claimed such and such-like testimonies for the creation, it might rightly be thought that one's opinion about creation should also match the ideas about the Only-begotten, the transfer occurring between things of the same sort as their counterpart. But since all such ideas and titles imply community with the Father, and transcend the concept of creation, will not our sophisticated, precise thinker be overwhelmed with shame as he uses features of creation to discuss the nature of the Lord of creation, not yet understanding that the characteristics of the divine nature are one thing, those of creation another?[142]

66. The chief division of all things that exist is between created and uncreated, the one as cause of what has come to be, the other deriving existence from that source. Since created nature and divine being are thus distinct, and have no mixture of their characteristic features, one must certainly not think of either in terms of resemblances, or look for the same characteristics in the separate kinds when describing their nature. **67.** Since the nature of the creation by itself reveals, as the book of all-virtuous Wisdom somewhere says, 'a beginning and end and middle part of times' (*Wisd* 7.18), and is extended in all the periods of time, we accept this feature as a characteristic of the reality in question, in that we surely see some beginning of its existence, and look for the middle, and extend our expectations towards its end. For we have been taught that the heaven and earth did not exist from eternity, nor will they exist for eternity; so from this it is clear that existing things started from a beginning,

142 We follow Jaeger, who has here added words which might have fallen out of the text. Without his addition, the sentence ends: 'not yet understanding that the characteristics of the creation are other?' Jaeger does not mark the question.

and will surely decline to some end. The divine nature however is limited on no side, but in all directions exceeds every limit by its infinity, and goes beyond those notes of time observed in the creation. **68.** The indivisible, immeasurable, uncircumscribed Power, containing in itself the ages and all the creation that is in them, and by the eternity of its own nature exceeding in every direction the infinity of the ages, either has no mark to indicate its nature, or has one quite different from that which the creation has. Since therefore it is a property of creation to have a beginning, the property of the creation would be alien to the uncreated nature. For if, after the fashion of the creation, one thought fit to suggest an origin of the Only-begotten also from some comprehensible beginning, he would surely be obliged also to attach to his account of the Son all the other things that logically follow. **69.** For once a beginning is conceded, it is impossible not to agree also to the consequence. If some one were to agree that a human being exists, he would include in his assent all the properties of that nature, and say that he is both animal and rational, and whatever else is
[p. 211] attributed to a human being. On just the same principle, if | we allow any one of the characteristic features of the creation in thinking of the divine being, it will no longer be in our power not to attach to the undefiled nature the whole list of what is envisaged in the creation; for the beginning will compellingly and necessarily entail what follows after it. **70.** The beginning so conceived is the beginning of the things that come after it, so that if they exist, it exists as well, while if the consequences are removed, what precedes does not remain either. Since therefore Wisdom adds to the beginning both a middle and an end, if we accept in the case of the Only-begotten a beginning of existence (ὑπόστασις) defined by some fixed point, as the heresy teaches, Wisdom will surely not allow that the end and the middle-point are not consequent upon the beginning. **71.** But if that should be the case, our theologian will be found demonstrating by his endeavours that the Deity is mortal. For if the end is, according to the word of Wisdom, necessarily consequent upon the beginning, and the middle-point is envisaged between the limits, by applying the one to the Power,[143] he simultaneously argues all the rest, prescribing measures and end of existence for the infinite nature. But if that is irreligious and wrong, it deserves the same or even greater condemnation to allow a starting-point to the argument that ends up in irreligion; and the starting-point for this kind of mistake appears to be the thought that the life of the Son is restricted by some beginning. **72.** So it is one thing or the other: either they will change to wholesome thought under the compulsion of these words, and envisage the one from

143 I have taken τῇ δυνάμει to refer to the divine Power described in §68 above. Others have translated 'potentially' or 'powerfully'.

the Father as sharing his eternity, or, if they are unwilling to do that, they will restrict the eternity of the Son at both ends, turning his infinite life into non-existence at its beginning and at its end. **73.** If the nature of souls and angels is also unending, and nothing prevents it from continuing for ever because it
[p. 212] is both created and has its beginning of existence from something, | so that our opponents might be able to say the same in Christ's case, as not existing from eternity yet continuing without end, the one who proposes this should also consider how far Deity differs in its properties from the creation. **74.** It is characteristic of Deity to lack no conceivable idea that appertains to the good, while the creation comes to be in a good state by participation in what is superior: not only did it begin to be, but it is also perceived as constantly beginning to be in a good state through its development towards the better. Consequently it never stands still where it is comprehended, but the whole created order through shared being becomes a beginning of ascent towards the greater, and in Paul's words (*Phil* 3.13) never ceases to reach out to things before and to cast oblivion on things behind.

75. Since therefore Deity is essentially life, and the Only-begotten God is God and Life and Truth and every conceivable thing that is sublime and God-befitting, while the creation derives its supply of good things from that source, it will be clear from this that, if it is indeed by participating in Life that it lives, and if it ceased that participation, then it would surely also cease to live. If therefore they dare to say also about the Only-begotten God those things which it is true to say of the creation, let them say this too along with all the rest, that like the creation he both has a beginning of existence, and remains alive in the same way as souls do. **76.** If however he is himself essentially Life and has no need to have life imported into him, while all the other things are not Life, but become participants in life, what need is there by means of
[p. 213] the visible parts of creation to reject | the eternity of the Son? That which is always the same by nature is not receptive of its opposite, and does not admit of change into something else. Those whose nature is marginal have an inclination ambivalent between alternatives, inclining as they will towards what they decide. If then authentic Life is perceived in the divine and transcendent nature, surely loss of it must be assumed to end up as its contrary. **77.** The idea of life and death is ambiguous and not understood in the same way. Physically the activity and movement of the bodily senses is called 'life', and conversely their failure and dissolution are called 'death'. Where the intelligible nature is concerned however, intimate affinity with the divine is true life, and loss of the divine is entitled 'death'. That is why the original evil, the devil, is called both 'death' and 'inventor of death', but is also said by the Apostle to 'have the power of death' (*Heb* 2.14). **78.** Therefore, the significance of 'death' being, as

we have said, twofold in its scriptural understanding, he who is truly invariable and unchangeable alone possesses immortality and dwells in light inaccessible (*1 Tim* 6.16) and unapproachable by the darkness of evil; those things however, which <exist variable by nature,>[144] share in death, being far from immortality through their inclination towards its contrary, and if they fall away from sharing in the good, would through the mutability of their nature receive participation in the bad, which is nothing else than death, since it corresponds to bodily death. **79.** Just as in that case the extinguishing of natural functions is called death, so too in the case of intelligible being, failure to move towards the good
[p. 214] is death and cessation of life: thus | the idea of non-corporeal creation does not damage the argument which proves the heresy wrong. The death which affects the intelligible nature, that is, separation from God, whom we know as Life, is not separated from that nature by it power; for emergence from non-being clearly points to mutability of nature. That to which change is congenital is protected by the grace of the one empowering from sharing the fate of the adversary; it is not by the power of its own nature that it remains in the good. A thing of this kind is not eternal. **80.** If then he[145] speaks the truth, saying we should not use the same terms to draw the parallel between the divine being and the created nature, and should not restrict the existence of the Son by some beginning, lest the other properties of creation, this being conceded, also creep in along with the assent to the one, then the wickedness is manifestly demonstrated of him who through the attributes of creation splits the Only-begotten God off from the Father's eternity. Just as no other characteristic of creation is observed in the Maker of the creation, so neither does the fact that he is from a Beginning demonstrate that the Son was not for ever in the Father, since he is Wisdom, Power, Light and Life, and all that is understood to be in the Father's bosom.

144 The grammar and argument of this sentence are awkward, and Jaeger supposes some words to have fallen out after '. . . its contrary'. I have proposed instead to add some words near the beginning, and read (*exempli gratia*): ὅσα δὲ τῇ φύσει ἀλλοιωτὰ γέγονεν, τοῦ θανάτου μετέχει . . .

145 Basil.

[p. 215] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Seven**

§§1–7a Eunomius' fine words about the supremacy of God

1. Still Eunomius goes on to the loftiest language, elevates himself, and tries with hollow pride to say something worthy of the majesty of God. His words are like this:

> For God, he says, being the supremest Good of all, and superior to all, and free from all necessity . . .

How well the generous fellow, like some ship without ballast, driven by the billows of deceit, brings his discourse to anchor in the haven of truth![146] God is 'the supremest Good of all.' A superb confession! **2.** But surely he would not make an accusation against John, in whose words God the Only-begotten is acclaimed as he who is with God, and is God (*Jn* 1.1). So if that herald of the deity of the Only-begotten is to be believed, and God is the supremest Good of all, then the Son is attested to be the supremest Good by the enemy of his glory! Since such a wording applies also to the Father, the superlative degree of the expression 'supremest' admits no comparative degree of less or more. Now
[p. 216] that we have | accepted these thoughts from the testimony of our adversaries in order to prove the glory of the Only-begotten, we may add, to reinforce sound thinking, his subsequent argument too. **3.** He says:

> The supremest Good, God, inasmuch as no nature obstructs, nor cause compels, nor need impinges, both generates and creates, in accordance with the supremacy of his own authority, having his will as sufficient power to constitute the things that are made. If therefore all is good in accordance with his will, he decrees not only that what is made is good, but when it is good that it be made, if it is in fact a sign of weakness to do what one does not intend.

4. Thus far the book of our opponents, pinned together[147] out of foul and deluded words, should be accepted by us. For he who 'in accordance with the supremacy of his own authority, has his will as sufficient power to constitute

146 The idea and some of the words are borrowed from Plato, *Theaet.* 144A (Jaeger).

147 The manuscripts give a unique word, διαπεπορπημένος, which may be corrupt as Jaeger suggests. The verb πορπάω seems to mean something like 'fasten with a brooch' or 'pin down,' and the compound with δια- adds the notion of 'pinning through' the bits of literary rubbish to hold them together, in Gregory's presentation of Eunomius.

the things that are made,' he who created all things, since 'no nature obstructs, nor cause compels, . . . decrees not only that what is made is good, but when it is good that it be made;' **5.** But he that made all things is the Only-begotten God, as the Gospel proclaims. When he willed, it was then that he made the creation, and then that with the body of heaven he surrounded the whole world contained within its framework by means of the revolving spheres. When he thought fit, it was then that he exposed the dry ground, and then that he imprisoned the waters in the encircling land. Then was the time for plants, for fruits, for the origin of animals, and for the forming of man, when each one
[p. 217] of them was deemed timely by the wisdom | of the creator. **6.** But the one who created all things (I repeat the same argument again) is the Only-begotten God, who made the ages (*Heb* 1.2). Once the periods of the ages had been laid down before things existed, it is appropriate to use that temporal adverb, because it was 'then' that he willed, and 'then' that he made. But when there was no age, nor any idea of temporal periods that is applicable to the divine nature, which is immeasurable and without temporal extent, then surely the connotation of temporal adverbs is ineffectual. **7.** While therefore it is not unreasonable to say that the temporal beginning was set for the creation as seemed good to the wisdom of him who made all things, to envisage the divine nature itself as having some temporal extension is work for those educated in the new philosophy.

§§7b–14 The absurd notion that God controls his own power

The kind of point, embedded in what he has said, which I deliberately passed over in my haste to reach my subject, I shall now take up again and spell out to demonstrate the cunning wit of our wordsmith. **8.** His 'supremest God,' he says,

> before such other things as are generated (γεννητά), controls his own power.

The statement has been lifted word for word from Philo the Hebrew into his own book by our wordsmith, and whoever cares may detect Eunomius' plagiarism from the actual works of Philo.[148] I have drawn attention to this at the present time, not so much to sneer at the poverty of the wordsmith's own words and thoughts, as intending to demonstrate the affinity between Eunomius' doctrines and the words of Jews. **9.** For Philo's argument would not match
[p. 218] his ideas word for word, if | there were not some family likeness between his thought and Philo's. Thus we may find included in the Hebrew's text the words,

148 Philo, *Migr. Abr.* 183 and *Leg. alleg.* III, 175 are suggested as the source (see Jaeger's notes on pp. 218 and 219). Except for 'God', the verbal likeness is inexact.

'God, before such other things as are generated (*gennêta*),' and immediately after there is tacked on by the new Judaism, 'controls his own power.' How absurd this is will be clearly demonstrated if the statement is examined. 'God,' he says, 'controls his own power.' What is it, tell me, that controls what? Being something other than the power, he absolutely controls the power, which is something else. So power is weaker than powerlessness! **10.** For what is something other than the power, is surely not the power; so he is found controlling power just insofar as he is not power! Perhaps, however, God, being power, has one power within himself, and by it he subdues the other one. But then, what is this battle and conflict, such that God divides the strength that exists in him, and with one part of his power masters the other? For he would not control his own power, if he were not supported in this by a greater and more forceful power. Such is Eunomius' God: duplex or multiplex, himself divided against himself, having his power out of harmony with his power, so as with one to thrust outwards towards disorder, with the other to check the impropriety of the movement. **11.** With what purpose, too, he controls the power as it starts towards generating (γέννησις), and what the evil is, which might befall if the act of generation is not prevented, or rather what it is by nature that at an earlier stage is being controlled, is for him to explain. The statement sug-
[p. 219] gests a motion of initiative and purpose, | envisaged as having a characteristic movement of its own. It is one thing that controls, another that is controlled by necessity. What is the power, which God controls, a nature with free will of its own, or something else? **12.** Does it press towards action, or stay motionless? If it is suggested that it stays still, that which is quiet needs none to control it; and if he says it controls, obviously it is movement and initiative that he controls. Yet he will surely say that it is something by nature other than him that exercises control. What he thinks that is, then, he ought to make clear in his book. Is it thought of as something with real existence (ὑπόστασις) other than God? Then how could something alien be in God? Or is it a state, thought of as in the divine nature without real existence? He could hardly say that: **13.** for what has no real existence simply is not, and what is not, is neither controlled nor released. What then is that controlled power, restrained from its proper function, while the time for the Son's begetting paused, waiting to allow the power to perform its natural function unimpeded? What was that intervening reason for delay, because of which God deferred the begetting of the Only-begotten, deeming it not yet right to become Father? **14.** What is this intervening thing, which intrudes between the life of the Father and that of the Son? Not time, not space, not any conceivable distance, nor anything else of the kind. What then is the sharp, perceptive eye looking at, when it observes the separation of the life of the Son from that of the Father? Pressed in on every side, he must

himself of necessity agree that there is nothing in between; and, if there is nothing intervening, does he not accept that their life in common is immediate and closely bound together?

§§15–24a Eunomius' evasion about why the Son's generation was deferred

[p. 220] | **15.** He condescends, however, to the limitations of our knowledge, and argues with us in a human way, as if himself one of us, modestly conceding the frailty of our mental processes, and taking refuge in the argument which Aristotle and those like him did not teach.

> For it was right and proper, he says, to beget the Son, just when he willed it, with no consequent cause for enquiry among thinking people about why it did not happen before.

What is this, Eunomius? Are you plodding along like us simpletons? Have you forsaken your logical structures, and take refuge yourself in condescending to the irrational?—you, who have repeatedly reproached those who try to write without training in logic;—you, who say to Basil,

> By saying that it is impossible for men to give an account of spiritual ideas you convict yourself of ignorance.

Again you put forward the same charge in another place,

> You generalize your own incompetence, declaring that what is impossible for you is impossible for everyone.

You, who say these and similar things, is this how you address the hearing of one who asks the reason why the Father postponed becoming Father of such a one? Do you suppose it is enough proof to say that he begot just when he willed it, and let there be no debate about it? **16.** Has your speculative grasp become so feeble for arguing doctrines? Where are your twin logical premises? Where are your compelling arguments? Why have your science's daunting and inescapable conclusions of syllogisms scattered, far away and insubstantial, and left us? 'He begot just when he willed it, and let there be no debate about it.' Are these words the outcome of so much sweated labour, of such weighty [p. 221] promises? What was the question?—'If it is right | and proper for God to have such a Son, why is it believed that what is right is not always with him?' What is the response he has made for us from his temple of philosophy, **17.** constraining

the argument with stringent proofs? 'He made the Son just when he willed it, and let there be no debate about why it did not happen before.' If the enquiry were about some animal, which acts in accordance with a natural instinct, and why it did not perform its intended act earlier, the spider making webs, the bee its honeycomb, the turtle-dove her nest, what else could you say? Would not the same response be ready to hand, that it made it when it willed, and let there be no debate about it? **18.** Also, in the case of a sculptor or painter, who uses his artistic skill to carry out his project in paintings or sculptures, when he is not subject to some authority for the performance of his art, the same sort of remark would be appropriate, I think, if any one wanted to ask why he did not put his skill into effect sooner, that being under no compulsion he made the time to act a matter of free choice. Human beings, because they do not always will the same things, and have not always the ability cooperating with their will as most things have, do something that they intend when their choice inclines to the action and no external factor prevents it. **19.** But that which is for ever the same, for which there is no acquisition of good things, in which any variation of purposes engendered by evil, through some kind of ignorance or error has no place, and which becomes nothing by change which it was not before, nor chooses any thing later which it did not perceive as good from the beginning,—to say of that, that it has not the good thing for ever, but
[p. 222] later chose | to have something which it did not choose before, that belongs to the philosophy which is well beyond us. **20.** For we have learnt that the divine is for ever full of every good, or rather, is itself the fullness of all good things for ever, and is in need[149] of no supplement to make it perfect, but is itself by its own nature the perfection of good. What is perfect is alien alike to increase and to diminution, and for this reason the perfection of good things attributed to the divine nature is, we say, always the same, and we apprehend it as such, whichever way we extend our minds. **21.** Therefore the divinity is never lacking in any thing good; yet the Son is the fullness of every good, so he is perceived as always in the Father, whose nature is to be perfect in every good. 'But no,' he says, 'there must be no question raised about why not earlier.' To this we shall reply: it is one thing, you wisest of men, to lay down the law by demanding something you want, another to win on disputed topics by rational argument. So as long as you can give no reason that makes it religiously correct to say that the Son was added to the Father, your demand will have no effect on people of sense.

149 So Jaeger's text, adding one letter to the Greek of the manuscripts. Without this change, one would translate, '. . . good things, if indeed it is in need . . .'

22. That then is how Eunomius brings the truth to light for us by his scientific method. For our part, in accordance with our usual practice we shall make his argument our own in support of the doctrines of the truth, in order that it may become clear even by that, that on every hand, involuntarily compelled by the truth itself, they argue for the case we make. For if 'he begot the Son
[p. 223] just when he willed it,' as our adversary says, and he | for ever willed the good, and the power is simultaneous with the will, then the Son will be perceived as always with the Father, who for ever both wills the good and is able to have what he wills. **23.** If it is necessary also to compare his subsequent argument with the truth, it is quite easy to align this too with our doctrine: 'Let there be no consequent cause for enquiry among thinking people about why it did not happen before.' The term 'before' has a temporal connotation, contrasting with what comes afterwards and later; but when time does not exist, then surely the words for temporal periods are eliminated too. Yet the Lord exists before times and ages; so for intelligent persons enquiry about earlier and later is useless in the case of the Maker of the ages. Words of this kind uttered in the absence of time are devoid of all meaning. **24.** Consequently, since the Lord is before times exist, there is surely no room for 'before' and 'after' in his case. Perhaps this too is enough to refute those who need no adversary, but are overthrown by their own inadequacy.

§§24b–38a Eunomius' argument that generation ends as well as begins

Who is so free from the concerns of life that he can devote himself so much to listening to the nonsense of our opponents' words and our battle with nonsensical things? Yet, because for those seized with impiety, the deceit, like a deep and wash-resistant dye, is imprinted in the depth of their hearts, let us apply just a little more effort to our argument, in case we can cleanse their minds of this evil stain of theirs. **25.** For when he said the words quoted, and added to them, in the manner of his instructor Prunicos,[150] some octads of incoherent and inconsistent insults and abuse, at the climax of his efforts he changes
[p. 224] direction, and forsaking the illogical | exposition of his futility, again arms his

150 This insult about Eunomius' instructor is also used in *CE* I.50 (GNO I 39), where Jaeger interprets Prunicos as a nick-name for shorthand writers, who were generally despised. Others see here a reference to a figure with that name in 'gnostic' mythology, and suggest that the obscure reference to 'octads' may reflect 'gnostic' use of the term 'ogdoad' for a set of eight. If in the absence of information one must speculate, one could suggest in support of Jaeger that a shorthand writer might well fold a sheet of papyrus to make eight pages of a notebook, and call it an octad.

book with pointed weapons of dialectic, and, so he thinks, argues against us the case for the absurd with syllogisms. **26.** The text runs thus:

> Since every act of generating (γέννησις)[151] does not go on indefinitely, but finally comes to an end, those also who accept the generation of the Son are absolutely obliged <to envisage>[152] that at some time he ceased being generated, and must not refuse to believe in his beginning; for things which have ceased to be generated have surely also begun. The cessation of being generated proves the beginning both of generating and being generated; and it is not possible for these people to refuse to believe it, both on the grounds of nature itself, and even more, of the divine laws.

Since therefore, in accordance with the wisdom of those clever at such things, he puts forward the generalisation, and tries to argue his case by deduction, comprehending the proof of the particular in the general proposition, let us first consider the general statement, and then examine the validity of the deductions. **27.** Is it devoutly decent to use 'every act of generation' to measure also the pre-eternal generation of the Son of God? And ought we to propose nature in general as our instructor on how the Only-begotten exists? I would not expect any one to reach such a degree of madness as to imagine such a thing about the divine and pure generation. 'Every act of generation,' he says, 'does not go on indefinitely.' What is meant by 'generation'? Does he mean the fleshly and corporeal process of reproduction, or the construction of lifeless things? **28.** But the passionate elements in corporeal generation are manifest,
[p. 225] and those | one certainly would not carry over to the divine begetting. So that our argument may not appear to digress by describing the works of nature, I will leave such things unmentioned, since I think every man of sense knows for himself the reasons why the act of generation takes time, begins and ends. It would be long and also superfluous to describe it all in detail, the coitus of the parents, the formation in the womb of what is being born, the pangs, the birth, the waiting-time, without which generation cannot take place. All these are equally alien to the divine generation of the Only-begotten. **29.** If any

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151 Our usual translation of this word and cognates as 'beget', 'begetting', does not work well in this context, where the generation of all created beings is in mind.

152 Jaeger points out that a word or words have fallen out of Eunomius' text. Those who do not accept the need for correction (including the *NPNF* translator) are obliged to add some word like 'say' to the sentence. I have myself assumed a lacuna, but later than where Jaeger places it. I suggest that ἐννοεῖν has fallen out after πεπαῦσθαι (cf. §32, p. 226,16–18). It is possible the mistake was in Gregory's own original, a miscopying of Eunomius.

one of these were conceded, all the rest would of necessity be admitted too. In order that the divine begetting may remain clear of any idea of passion, we shall not apply to it any thought of temporal extent. What begins and ends is surely thought of as having extent; but all extent is measured in time, and if time does not exist, whereby both end of birth and beginning are indicated, it is nonsense to envisage an end and a beginning in the timeless act of generation, when there is to be found no meaningful concept of when it begins or when in ceases. **30.** If we turn to the lifeless created things, in their case similarly place, time, material, preparation, the craftsman's ability, and many such things come together to complete the production of what is made; and because with all the things being made, time certainly extends alongside, and the impulses towards producing what is made are implied at the same time as every created thing, whether it be alive or lifeless, it is possible to discover in their case manifest beginnings and endings of existence; for the very provision of material becomes the beginning of production, and some indication
[p. 226] of place and sequence in time. All these | mark the beginnings and endings of things made, and no one would say they have anything to do with the pre-eternal coming into existence of Only-begotten God, so as to draw a parallel between what applies to these lower things and a beginning and end in the case of his begetting.

31. Now that we have made these distinctions. we may again turn our attention to the argument of our opponents.

> Every act of generating, he says, does not go on indefinitely, but finally comes to an end.

What is meant by 'generating' has been observed to bear one of two senses; therefore, whether he intends to indicate by a term like this the birth of bodily things or the production of created things, neither of which has anything to do with the perfectly pure nature, the premise has been shown to be alien to his purpose. **32.** It is not the case that, as he argues, just because all making and begetting come to an end, 'those also who accept the generation of the Son are absolutely obliged' to confine it in twin limits, envisaging for it a beginning and an end. Only those things confined within some measurement begin being made and come to an end, and the measure of time set alongside the extent of what is generated, separates the beginning from the end by the interval between. But what has no size or extent, how could one measure it or estimate its extent? How could one find a measure for what has no size, or extent in the unextended? **33.** Or how can one encompass infinity with beginning and end? 'Beginning' and 'end' are words for chronological limits. When there

is no chronology there are no limits, either. But of course the divine nature is
[p. 227] unextended, and being unextended, has no limit; it is, and the unlimited | is called infinite. So it is futile to circumscribe the infinite with beginning and end: the circumscribed cannot be infinite. How then does it come about that this Platonic Phaedrus stitches Plato's philosophical argument about the soul[153] mismatched into his own doctrines? **34.** For just as Plato there speaks of a 'cessation of movement', so he too wants to speak of a 'cessation of being generated', in order to surround those inexpert in these things with Platonic literary elegance; 'and it is not possible,' he says, 'for these people to refuse to believe it, both on the grounds of nature itself, and even more, of the divine laws.' But from what we have said, nature has been shown by us to be unreliable for the doctrine of the divine begetting, even if one were to propose the world itself to illustrate the argument, since even for the creation of that, as we learn from Moses' account of the making of the world, measurement of time proceeded beside it in an order and sequence, counted out in stated days and nights for each thing being made. Even the argument of our opponents itself does not accept this in the case of the origin (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten, but concedes that the Lord exists before eternal times.

35. There remains to be considered the support for the case from the 'divine laws', whereby he promises to demonstrate both the end and the beginning of the begetting of the Son.

> God, he says, when he intended the law about his creative action (δημιουργία) to be laid down for the Hebrews, did not, at the end of his
> [p. 228] creative action, | prescribe the first day of its generation, and belief in its beginning; for it was not the first day of its generation, but the seventh, the day in which he rested from his works, which he appointed as the memorial of his creative action.[154]

153 Jaeger refers to Plato, *Phaedrus* 245 C.

154 Eunomius is plainly referring to *Gen* 2.1–3, emphasizing that the work of generating the creation has an end in time, which applies also to the generation of the Son of God. Jaeger marks some words in this sentence for deletion as a false repetition, and also marks a lacuna near the end. It is true that quotations from Eunomius are especially prone to corruption in the manuscripts, but we have preferred to make sense of the majority reading without these changes. Jaeger's amended text seems to mean: 'God, he says, when he intended the law about his creative action (δημιουργία) to be laid down for the Hebrews, at the end prescribed belief in his creative action and in its beginning; for it was not the first day of its generation, but the seventh, the day in which he rested from his works, which he appointed as the memorial of his creative action.' The alleged lacuna might have contained εἰς, or something more substantial.

Will any one believe that these words were written by him, and not interpolated by us out of malice towards the author, in order to make him seem ridiculous to his readers, as dragging in to demonstrate his case things which have nothing to do with the questions under discussion? His object was to show, as he promised, that the Son did not exist when he was begotten, but that he had a beginning of begetting and a cessation of being begotten, as if a sort of labour-pain extended his begetting in time. What is the argument for that?—that the Hebrew people kept Sabbath according to law on the seventh day! What great relevance of evidence to the proposition! **37.** Because the Jew honours the Sabbath by idleness, that proves, so he alleges, that the Lord had a beginning of his birth and ceased being born. How many more testimonies to this have been overlooked by our wordsmith, no less supportive of his case than the one stated?—circumcision on the eighth day, the week of unleavened bread, the ceremony of the fourteenth day of the lunar cycle, the sacrifices of purification, the ritual for lepers, the ram, the calf, the heifer, the scapegoat. **38.** If these later examples are far away from the subject, those so keen on the Jewish ceremonies must explain how the first one relates to the debate.

§§38b–43 Temporal expressions are meaningless when time is not yet created

[p. 229] For our part, we deem it mean and | unmanly to trample on the fallen, and shall search in what follows in his text for something to rouse the efforts of his opponent. All that he says, therefore, in the subsequent passage, where he argues that one should not envisage anything intervening between the Son and the Father, we pass over as in agreement with our doctrine. **39.** It would show want of discretion and want of sense not to discriminate in what is said between the irreproachable and the blameworthy, because when he contradicts his own words he does not follow up the things agreed: he both asserts the immediacy and rejects the close bond; he envisages nothing existing before the Only-begotten and supposes that he is Son, yet is belligerent about his being begotten when he did not exist. Having spent a little time on these matters, because we have in what precedes already argued the case, we shall turn to the matter in hand.

40. The same person cannot posit nothing prior to the coming into being (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten, and say that he was not before he was begotten, but was begotten when the Father willed it. 'Then' and 'when' correctly and inherently convey the meaning of a temporal point, both in the normal usage of correct speech and in the vocabulary of scripture. 'Then shall they say among the nations' (*Ps* 125/126.2), and 'When I sent you out' (*Lk* 22.35), and 'Then shall the kingdom be likened' (*Mt* 25.1), and many thousand similar

expressions are to be found throughout scripture to prove the point, that the practice of scripture is to give an indication of time by such phrases in the text.
[p. 230] **41.** If therefore time did not exist, as our opponent concedes, | all temporal indication surely disappears with it; but if that does not exist, the eternity of the concept must necessarily come to replace it. With the expression, 'did not exist', the word 'once' is surely also understood. If any one says, 'did not exist,' without the 'once', he must concede that it does not exist now, either. But if he concedes 'now' and resists 'eternally', it is surely not total non-existence, but 'once was not' that he has in mind. **42.** Since however this expression has no substance at all, unless it is based on the indication of time, it would be senseless and futile to say that nothing existed before the Son, and to argue that the Son does not always exist. For if there is no place nor time nor any other created thing in which the Word who is from the beginning does not exist, the thought that the Lord once did not exist is in every way eliminated from true religious doctrine. So the one who teaches that the Only-begotten both is and is not, is in dispute, not with us, but with himself. By conceding that the bond of the Son with the Father is divided by nothing, he has surely attested his eternity. **43.** If he says, however, that the Son is not in the Father, we shall not contradict such a statement ourselves, but quote the scripture against it instead, which says that the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son (cf. *Jn* 10.38; 14.10), without adding 'once', or 'when', or 'then' in the wording, but attesting his eternity with this ineffable and irrefutable voice.

§§44–54 Eunomius' charge that Gregory makes the Son 'unbegotten'

44. To argue that our words make the Only-begotten God unbegotten, is the same as saying that we also declare the Father to be begotten. **45.** Both are equally absurd, or rather equally blasphemous. So if he knows how to tell lies,
[p. 431] let him lay the other charge too, | and not refrain from anything that might exacerbate the hostility of this audience towards us. If he does not accuse us of one of these, because of its obvious falsehood, let him give up the other one too: it is just as impious, as we have said, to say that the Son is unbegotten and that the Father is begotten. **46.** If any one can find in what we have written any such statement, in which the Son is called unbegotten, we shall give the final verdict against ourselves; but if he deliberately invents false charges and lies, making up things at will to slander our doctrines, it will to people of discernment perhaps be itself proof of our pious orthodoxy, that when truth fights on our side, he puts forward falsehood, laying the charge of irreligion in terms quite alien to our thought. But it is possible to respond to these charges briefly. **47.** Just as we judge accursed the one who says that the Only-begotten exists unbegotten, so let him also curse the one who declares that he who is in

the Beginning, once did not exist. By such means the one who lays accusations in truth and the one who does so falsely will be clearly shown. But if we ourselves deny the charges, and when we use the word 'Father' envisage the Son at the same time, and when we name the Son, we say that he truly is what he is called, radiating begotten from the unbegotten Light, why is the falsehood not obvious, of those who harp on about our saying that the Only-begotten is unbegotten? We do not of course accept that, because he exists begotten, for that reason he once did not exist. **48.** Everybody knows that there is a direct contradiction between being and not-being, so that the statement of the one
[p. 232] term | must certainly imply the negation of the other, and that, just as existing is the same at every time in which one supposes that any being comes into existence (for heaven and stars and sun do not exist more today than they did yesterday and the day before, and in all preceding time), in the same way the meaning of not always being implies non-existence just as much, whether one is speaking in terms of before or after. **49.** Nothing that exists is any more non-existent now than if it was previously non-existent; rather, the meaning of not being is the same when applied to what does not exist at any period of time. That is why in the case of living things and the dissolution into non-being of what has been, and the passing into being of what has not yet acquired it; we may indicate their non-existence with different terminology, saying either that they have not existed in the first place or that what existed has died; but in what we say we mean non-existence equally in both cases. **50.** For just as day is limited by night at both ends, and the same word is not used for the limiting night, but one is after evening, the other before dawn, yet night is what is meant in both cases, in the same way, if one were to think of that which is not, in contrast to that which is, he may name differently that which is before its constitution, and that which follows the dissolution of what is constituted, but he will reckon the meaning of both to be the same. The non-being of what has not been born and of what has died is just the same, except for the difference of terminology, leaving out of account the idea of hope of resurrection. **51.** Since therefore we learn from scripture that the Only-begotten God is
[p. 233] Prince of Life and Absolute Life, | Light, Truth, and whatever else is estimable in name and meaning, we say it is absurd and wicked to combine in thought with that which really is, the opposite notion, whether destruction by dissolution or non-existence before being constituted; but stretching our mind in both directions, to the future and to the pre-eternal past, we in no way lapse towards non-being in our thinking, deeming it just as wicked to cut down the deity with non-existence at any time whatsoever. It is the same thing to say that the immortal Life is mortal, the Truth false, the Light dark, and that which Is, non-existent. **52.** One who will not concede the future non-existence, will not,

to our way of thinking, allow the previous non-existence, avoiding the same absurdity on both sides; for as the endlessness of the life of the Only-begotten is not cut short by death, so, looking backwards, non-existence will not prevent the extension of his life to eternity, so that in both directions what really Is may be free from participation in what is not. This is why the Lord, intending that his disciples should be far from any such error, so that they themselves might never, in looking for something older than the existence (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten, be carried away in their thinking towards non-existence, says, 'I am in the Father and the Father in me' (*Jn* 14.10), in order that what is not might not be thought of as in that which is, nor that which is, as in what is not. The very order of the text makes clear the orthodoxy of the doctrine. **53.** Because the Father is not from the Son, but the Son from the Father, he therefore first says, 'I am in the Father,' demonstrating that he exists in no other
[p. 234] way, but from him, then reverses the | saying, 'And the Father in me,' indicating that anyone who in curious speculation transcends the Son also goes beyond the idea of the Father. He that is in another cannot be found outside the one in whom he is. Hence it is futile for one who does not deny that the Father is in the Son, and to imagine that any trace of the Father is to be understood as outside the Son, **54.** and the shadow-boxing of our adversaries about the term 'unbegottenness', vainly based on non-existence, is a quite futile error.

§§55–64 The error of supposing that all that the Son is once did not exist

55. Even more, however, if there is further need to drag into the open the whole absurdity of his book, let a little more time be given to the enquiry. When the Only-begotten God is said by them to have been begotten later than the Father, their 'unbegotten' inevitably appears, whatever they imagine it is, to present at the same time the thought of evil. Every one knows that, just as that which is not is opposed to that which is, so too is whatever concept is inimical to every good reality and word, as malice is to decency, falsehood to truth, darkness to light, and whatever else in the same way as these are opposed to each other, where the opposition is direct, and does not allow the two to co-exist in the same place, but the presence of the one eliminates its opposite, and with the withdrawal of the one the contrary comes into existence. **56.** So, if we are agreed about these things, it should also be clear to all that, as Moses says that there was darkness before the creation of light (*Gen* 1.2–3), so in the case of the Son, if as the heresy says, 'It was then that the Father made him, when he willed,'
[p. 235] then before he made him, that Light, which is the | Son, did not exist. But when there is yet no Light, it is impossible for its opposite not to be. We learn from the other things that none of what the Designer made is random, but what is

needed for existing beings is introduced by creation. It must therefore surely be clear that, if indeed God made the Son, it was because of what was lacking in the nature of existing beings. **57.** So just as when physical light was wanting, there was darkness, and if the light had not been made, the darkness would surely have prevailed, so too when the Son did not yet exist, the true Light and all that the Son is, did not yet exist. What is, even on the testimony of the heresy, does not lack being. If he made, therefore, he surely made what does not exist. So before, as they allege, the Son was made, the Truth had plainly not been made either, nor spiritual Light, nor the fountain of Life, nor any thing at all that is by nature fine and good. **58.** Yet with the removal of either of these the opposite is put in its place: if there is no light, there cannot be no darkness, and similarly in the other cases, instead of each of those things considered better, when any of them is absent, it is surely impossible for the opposite not to exist in place of what is missing. One is absolutely obliged to say that, while the Father (according to the heretical account) had yet to decide to make the Son, when there was none of those things which the Son is, all the opposites of what he is existed: instead of light, darkness, instead of truth, falsehood, instead of life, death, instead of good, evil. **59.** He who creates, creates what is not; for what is, as Eunomius says, needs no begetting. With things perceived as contradictory, there is no way that the better can exist except by the existence of the worse. This then is what the wisdom of the heresy bestows on the
[p. 236] Father by dishonouring | the Son's eternity: it attributes to God the Father the list of evils before the appointment of the Son.

60. Let none suppose he can divert from the rest of creation the doctrinal absurdity resulting from this logic. Some one might perhaps say that, just as when the heaven did not exist, there was nothing contrary to it, so also when the Son had not yet come into existence, he who is the Truth, we are surely not obliged to agree that its contrary existed. To him one might reply, that the opposite of heaven is nothing, unless one were to say that the opposite of its existence is its non-existence. But to virtue, what belongs to evil is certainly opposed, and the Lord is virtue; so when there was no heaven, there was nothing, but when there was no Good, there was its contrary. **61.** So if one says that good does not exist, he will surely concede, even reluctantly, that evil does. 'But,' he replies, 'the Father is total Virtue and Life and unapproachable Light, and every sublime thought and title; so it is not necessary to postulate, when the Only-begotten Light did not yet exist, the corresponding darkness in opposition.'[155] That however is just my point: darkness never existed, because

155 Jaeger spreads the text of this quotation, as if it were from Eunomius. It is perhaps better attributed to Gregory's hypothetical critic.

there never was when the Light was not; for surely the Light is always in the Light, as the prophecy says.[156] **62.** If however, in accordance with the heretical argument, the unbegotten Light is one thing, the begotten another, and the one is from eternity, while the other came into existence later, it must certainly follow that the eternal Light is incapable of resisting what opposes it: if it were always shining, the action of darkness would have no room to affect it. In the case however of the one that came to be later, according to them, it is impossible that the Light should not 'shine out of darkness' (cf. *2 Cor* 4.6);[157] but then
[p. 237] quite certainly | darkness will be regarded as intervening between the eternal Light and the one that came into being afterwards. **63.** There would have been no need for the construction of the later Light, if the one being created were not needed for something. One use of light is that by it the prevailing pitch gloom should be dispersed. The Light that exists uncreated is itself and of itself what it is by nature; the one being created is surely being made for a purpose. There must therefore necessarily first exist the darkness, for the sake of which the illumination is necessarily designed; and there is no argument able to reassure us that the darkness does not precede the appointment of the begotten Light, when his construction is believed to come later. **64.** Yet such a thought is beyond wickedness. So it is clearly demonstrated that the Father of Truth did not make Truth when it did not exist, but, being the Fount of Light and Truth and every good, he radiated from himself the Only-begotten Light of Truth, by which the glory of his personal being (ὑπόστασις) is for ever replicated, so that the blasphemy of those who say that the Son first came into being later than God by creation, is comprehensively refuted.

[p. 238] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Eight**

§§1–4 Eunomius' claim that knowledge of divine realities is possible

1. Let us attend, however, to our theme. A little further on, Eunomius attacks those who hold that human nature is too weak to think about incomprehensible things, and makes this sort of bombastic statement, belittling our position with these words:

> Not even if someone's mind, blinded by malice, and consequently unable to see what is in front or what is overhead, were poor at grasping the

156 Apparently alluding to *Ps* 35/36.9/10, 'In thy light we shall see light.'

157 It is not clear whether Gregory is simply using familiar words without deliberate reference to the text, or whether the Eunomians actually cited this text to make their point.

truth, ought he therefore to think that the discovery of realities is not attainable by the rest of mankind.

2. I would say to him, that he who claims that the discovery of realities is attainable, has surely advanced his thinking by some means or logical sequence through the knowledge of realities, and by exercising his comprehension on things easy to grasp and of less import, has thus extended his speculative comprehension to those beyond all understanding. **3.** Therefore one who boasts that he has comprehended the knowledge of realities must explain what is the nature of the smallest phenomena before us, so that he may, by what is
[p. 239] familiar, | convince us about what is obscure. Let him in his book explain the nature of the ant. Is its life sustained by breath and respiration? Does it function with internal organs in the same way as other animals? Is its body encased in bones? Are the interior spaces of the bones <full>[158] of marrow? Are its joints reinforced with tendons and sinews? Is the arrangement of sinews held together by coverings of muscles and glands? Does the marrow extend with the dorsal vertebrae from tip to tail? Is it by the surrounding sinewy tissue that motive power is supplied to the moving parts? Is there in it a liver and a gallbladder next to the liver, kidneys and heart, arteries and veins, membranes, abdominal wall and diaphragm? Is it smooth or hairy? Is there a distinction between male and female? In what part of the body lies the power of vision or of hearing? Has it a sense of smell? Are its feet single or many-toed? How long does it live? What is the manner of their sexual reproduction? How long is their period of gestation? Why are not all ants flightless, or all winged, but some walk upon the ground, while others are airborne? **4.** He therefore who claims that he comprehends the knowledge of realities should in the first place reveal to us the nature of the ant, and only then give a scientific account of the Power which transcends all thought. If however he has not yet dealt scientifically with the nature of the tiny ant, why does he boast that he has grasped with his comprehending mind the one who embraces within himself all cre-
[p. 240] ation, and | say that those, who of their own accord confess the weakness of human nature, are blinded in their mental perceptions and unable to attain to 'what is in front or what is overhead'?

§§5–12 Eunomius' claim that Christ's titles indicate access to knowledge of the Father

5. As to him that has knowledge of realities, let us see what he knows more than other people, let us hear his voice so grave. He says:

158 There is a verb missing from this sentence, as Jaeger notes. I have guessed πεπλήρωται.

> Otherwise it would be in vain that the Lord names himself "Door", since there would be no one going in to understand and contemplate the Father, in vain also "Way", if he provides no opportunity for those who desire to come to the Father; and how would he be Light, if he did not illuminate people, if he did not shine upon the mind's eye so that it may perceive both him and the transcendent Light?

Now if he had been reporting ideas of his own, evading by their subtlety the understanding of the audience, one could perhaps have been deceived by the ingenuity of the argument, since the inner meaning often eludes the hearer. **6.** But since he advances divine words, no one surely will blame those who believe the divinely inspired teaching, which is common property to all. So because the Lord is called Door, he says, it follows logically from this that the essential being of God is comprehensible. But the Gospel does not admit of this interpretation. Let us hear the actual divine text: 'I am the Door;' it says, 'if any one comes in through me, he shall be saved, and shall come in and go out, and shall find pasture' (*Jn* 10.9). Which part of this is the knowledge of the essential being? **7.** Since there are quite a few words, and each has its own meaning in accordance with what is meant, it is both impossible for all of them
[p. 241] to apply to the idea of being, so that | the divinity may not be thought of as a combination of different things, and the word that could most properly fit the idea in question is not easy to identify among those cited. The Lord is the Door: 'If any one comes in through me,' he says, 'he shall be saved, and shall come in and go out, and shall find pasture.' Are we to say that he means the entering to stand for 'being', or the salvation of those entering, or their exit, or the pasture, or the finding? Each of these has its own proper meaning, and does not coincide exactly with the next. That to come inside is the opposite of going out, seems obvious, and it is the same with the rest. **8.** By definition pasture is one thing, finding it something else. Which then of these refers to the Father's being? If one said 'all of them,' when they do not coincide exactly in meaning with each other, he could not describe the simple and uncompounded being in terms which do not coincide; and how could the saying be true, that 'No one has ever seen God' (*Jn* 1.18), or, 'Whom no man has ever seen, nor can see' (*1 Tim* 6.16), or, 'There is none who shall see the face of the Lord and live' (*Ex* 33.20), if indeed the space within the door or outside it, or the finding pasture, were the being of the Father? **9.** It does not follow that, because these things are not the case, it is idle and meaningless to apply the title 'Door' to the Lord. For he truly is a 'door of containment' and a 'house of refuge', as David says (*Ps* 140/141.3; 30/31.3/2), and through himself he receives those who come in, and in himself saves those who enter, and again through himself leads out to

the pasture of virtues, and becomes all things to those being saved, in order to make himself helpful to each one; both way and guide and door of containment and house of refuge and water of rest and place of greensward (*Ps* [p. 242] 22/23.2), which in the Gospel | he calls 'pasture'. Our new theologian, however, says that the Lord is called 'Door' because of the knowledge of the Father's being. **10.** Then why does he not also twist the Rock too, and the Stone, the Fountain, the Wood, and the other titles, into the same interpretation, so that his personal doctrine might be persuasive through the multitude of curious testimonies, since he could attach the same meaning to each of them as that he ascribes to the Way, the Door, and the Light? For my part, taught by divinely inspired scripture, this is what I boldly declare: He who is above every name becomes many-named for us, with titles according to his various acts of kindness, Light when he abolishes the darkness of ignorance, Life when he bestows immortality, Way when he guides us from error to truth; so too Strong Tower, Fenced City, Fountain, Rock, Vine, Physician, Resurrection, and all such names are given to him in relation to us, distributing himself variously between his benefits to us. **11.** Those however who are sharp of eye beyond what is natural to man, interpreting essential beings through the titles, those who see the incomprehensible and fail to see the comprehensible, assert that they can not only see him whom no man has ever seen nor can see (cf. *1 Tim* 6.16), but even measure him, while they do not perceive faith with the mind's eye, something which in fact is alone within reach of our understanding, because they claim that knowledge derived from reason is superior to this. **12.** It is like the way I understand the story told against the sons of Benjamin, who, though they did not observe the law, could shoot a single hair (*Jdg* 20.16), where I think the [p. 243] story makes plain | their preoccupation with the futile, since they were accurate and splendid shooters of targets without use or substance, but ignorant and untrained in matters obviously useful. The story adds to what we have told the calamity that befell them, how, maddened as in the iniquity of the men of Sodom, they suffered destruction by the full force of the people of Israel in arms against them.[159] I think it would be a kindness to advise the archers, not to wish to shoot at hairs, while ignoring the door of faith, but to give up the vain attempt on the unattainable, and not to lose the offered reward, which is acquired only through faith.

159 The men of Sodom demanded the right to abuse the guest in their city (*Gen* 19.4–5), and the story is closely paralleled by what the Benjamites did to the visitor to Gibeah (*Jdg* 19.22–26), for which they were punished when the armies of Israel destroyed nearly their whole tribe (*Jdg* 20).

§§13–23 Eunomius' claim that the mind seeks eternal life even before the Son existed

13. I have studied the rest of the publication, and I hesitate to bring forward more of the argument, being afflicted in my heart by some horror at what is said. He wants to show that the Son is something other than eternal life, though if that is not thought to be in the Only-begotten, our faith will be proved vain, our proclamation empty, our baptism superfluous, valueless the sufferings of the martyr, useless and unprofitable for the human race, the efforts of the apostles. **14.** For why have they proclaimed Christ, when there is not in him, according to Eunomius, the power of eternal life? And why are believers called by the name of Christ, if they are not going to share eternal life through him?

> The mind, he says, of believers in the Lord overtops every sensible and intelligible being, and is not such as to stop at the generation of the Son, but passes even beyond that, as in its desire for eternal life it yearns to achieve the First.

[p. 244] **15.** Which of these words shall I most deplore?—that | the wretches think that eternal life is not in the Son, or that they take such a mean and earth-bound view of the person (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten, as to suppose, climbing by reasoning beyond his beginning, that they can in their own mind 'overtop', rising above the Son's life, and leaving the Lord's begetting somewhere below, pass beyond it in their desire for eternal life? The meaning of the words quoted is this: that the human mind, hunting for the knowledge of realities, and raising itself above the sensible and intelligible creation, will leave below it, like everything else, God the Word who was in the beginning, and reaches where God the Word was not, by busy enquiry of the mind treading in regions above the living existence of the Son, hunting for eternal life where the Only-begotten God is not. **16.** In his desire for eternal life, he says, he is carried in his mind beyond the life-span of the Son, as though, of course, in the Son he has not found what he seeks. So if eternal life is not in the Son, then he who said, 'I am the Life' (*Jn* 14.6) will be caught lying.[160] Or is he Life, but not eternal? But what is not eternal is surely temporary; yet life of such a kind is common even to irrational animals. Where then is the majesty of real Life, if the irrational animal nature shares it too? And how can Reason (Λόγος) be the same as Life, if through temporary life it inhabits the race of irrationals? **17.** If, according to great John, Reason (Λόγος) is Life (cf. *Jn* 1.4), but that is temporary and

160 I have departed from Jaeger's text by reading ἄρα instead of ἆρα, and by punctuating as a statement at this point instead of a question.

not eternal, as the heresy opines, and all the rest have temporary life, what is the logical conclusion? Either irrational beasts are rational, or Reason is rec-
[p. 245] ognized as irrational! | Do we need any more words to refute their abominable and wicked blasphemy? Are not such remarks intended to keep secret their intention to deny the Lord? **18.** For if the Apostle tells us openly that what is not eternal is temporary (*2 Cor* 4.18), whereas these men see eternal life as only in the being of the Father, and by alienating the Son from the Father's nature they also cut him off from eternal life, what is it but open denial and rejection of faith in the Lord, when the Apostle says plainly that those who in this life only have hoped in Christ are the most wretched of all men (*1 Cor* 15.19)? If then the Lord is life, but not eternal, then the life functioning at the present time is surely temporary and fleeting, and those who hope in it the Apostle pities, as missing the true Life.

19. Those nevertheless who are initiated with Eunomius' illumination have gone past the Apostle, and are carried up by their reasoning to regions beyond the Son, seeking eternal life in what is perceived as outside the Only-begotten. What else should one say about such evils, except that it calls forth weeping and tears? How are we to mourn over this wretched and miserable generation, which has produced a crop of such evils? The zealous Jeremiah once lamented over the people of Israel, when they conspired in evil with Jeconiah the teacher of idolatry, and for their crimes against religion were condemned to captivity in Assyria, expelled from their holy place and carried far off from the inheritance of their fathers.[161] **20.** It seems to me that these lamentations are more
[p. 246] rightly | sung now, when Jeconiah's imitator is dragging the victims of his deceit into this new kind of idolatry, banishing them from their fathers' inheritance, I mean, from the faith. As in the historical case of Babylon, their transportation is simply from Jerusalem on high, that is, from the Church of God, as they are removed to this confusion of wicked doctrines: 'Babylon' means 'confusion'. And just like the blinded Jeconiah, Eunomius too has voluntarily deprived himself of the light of truth and fallen prey to the Babylonian tyrant. The wretch did not observe that the Gospel teaches us to perceive eternal life equally in Father, Son and Holy Spirit: of the Father, the Word says this, that to know him is everlasting life (*Jn* 17.3); of the Son, that every one who believes in him has

161 Jaeger's references to *Jer* 24.1 and 34.17 are not helpful. The nearest single text to what Gregory writes is the prefatory verse to *Lam* 1.1 (LXX), where the words 'lament' and 'captivity' occur, and it is probably the book of *Lamentations* that Gregory has in mind. There is of course a general reference to the history of the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the religious events leading up to it, which fill much of the book of *Jeremiah* and some of 2 *Kgs* = 4 *Regn*.

eternal life (*Jn* 3.15); and of the Holy Spirit, that for one who has received his grace he will be a spring welling up for eternal life (*Jn* 4.14). **21.** Every one therefore who desires eternal life, when he finds the Son (the true Son, I mean, and not falsely so called), finds in him all that he desires, because he himself both is life, and has life in himself. He however, the subtle of mind and perceptive of heart, by his great sharpness of vision does not find eternal life in the Son, but rather by-passes him and leaves him behind like some obstacle to his quest, and hunts for eternal life just where he thinks real life is not.

22. What could any one imagine, when compared with this, either more shocking as a blasphemy, or more pitiful as a subject of lamentation? Yet going
[p. 247] on about 'Sabellius' and 'Montanus' in our doctrines | is rather like someone attributing to us the blasphemy of anomoeanism.[162] If one were to examine critically the false teaching of these heresies, he would find they have much in common with the error of Eunomius. **23.** Each one of them judaizes, accepting in their doctrine neither the Only-begotten God nor the Holy Spirit into community with the godhead of the one they call the 'Great' and 'First' God. The one Sabellius calls 'Trionymous', Eunomius calls 'Unbegotten', but neither of them thinks of the godhead as in the Trinity of Persons (ὑποστάσεων). Who it is then that belongs with Sabellius, the judgment of those who read the book must decide.

So much for this topic.

§§24–31 Sayings of Eunomius about conjunction and about the separation of the Father from begetting

24. Since in what follows in his atrocious efforts he tries hard to stir up ill odour, where he argues that the Only-begotten once was not, I suggest that, now that our thought on these subjects has been modestly clarified in the foregoing pages, we should not any more contaminate our book with evils of this kind. This one thing however, selecting from many, it might be not inopportune to add. **25.** He says,[163]

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162 The emphasis of the Cappadocian Fathers on the coequal deity of Father, Son and Spirit was said by their opponents to share the heresy of Sabellius, who about AD 200 was alleged to have held that Father, Son and Holy Spirit were a single person in three guises or modes, or Montanus, who fifty years earlier had led a revival centred on a new dispensation of the Spirit, but whom Gregory seems to suppose to be Sabellian. Gregory claims to be as far from them as from the Anomoeans, or 'unlikers', a term of abuse applied to those like Aetius and Eunomius. The introduction of this topic here is rather abrupt.

163 At this point a passage appears to be missing in the Greek manuscripts used by Jaeger, who indicates a lacuna. It is preserved in the writing of Peter of Callinicum, Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch 581–591, who quotes long passages from Gregory and other orthodox writers

> <Generation is separate from the ingenerate but joined to the Son's substance.

Does this not suffice to prove the ignorance of the author's mind? Who does not know that what can be separated from something and joined to something is first conceived of on its own, and in this way is joined to something else or separated from what it is joined to, for 'joining' is not predicated of a single item on its own. So, because he called generation 'separate from' the Father 'but joined to the Son's substance', it is wholly necessary that what can be separated and joined should be seen entirely properly and on its own, for what does not exist and does not subsist is neither separated from anything nor joined to anything. But because he says 'generation is joined to the Son's substance', he must view each of them on its own; for if he supposed the one was the same as the other, he would not have termed the identity 'joining', it being clear to everybody that the signification of 'joining' is not observable in the single item on its own, but that the term indicates relationship with something else. In which case the substance seen on its own is one thing and the separation and the generation which is joined to the substance but separate seen on its own is one thing and the generation which is joined to this substance but separate, according to what he says, from the Father's, is something other than it. But if generation is seen on its own by our opponents, it will be acknowledged, even by our adversaries, that the Only-begotten's substance is something other than it. For what is joined to something is not the same as what it is joined to, and what is not the same must be other. So if the concept of substance and that of generation are different, the heresy will be cancelled by the very things he says. For then the Only-begotten's substance will not vary from the Father's substance through the difference between ingeneracy and generacy, for it has been proved by our opponents themselves that generation is something other than substance, so that there will be no necessity for a relationship to exist between what are viewed in the substance and the one joined with it;

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in his own Christological controversy with Damian of Alexandria. See *Petri Callinicensis patriarchae antiocheni tractatus contra Damianum IV*, ed. Rifaat Y. Ebied/Albert van Roey†/Lionel R. Wickham (*CChrSG* 54), Turnhout: Brepols 1998, pp. 300–305. The English version from that edition is here quoted, by kind permission of the Publisher. I owe this valuable reference to Matthieu Cassin, for which I am profoundly grateful.

The original Greek of Peter's work being lost, it survives in Syriac translation, on which the English is based. The conventions of English translation are not the same as mine, so 'substance' will be found where I would presumably write 'being', 'generate' and 'ingenerate' etc. for 'beget', 'unbegotten', etc., and 'joined' for 'conjoined'.

but if generation exists on its own and again substance is understood on its own, an unique concept, with no participation by the other, will apply to each of them. For if someone were to follow Eunomius in the examination of the thought now proposed by him, and return the attack, it would be possible for an equivalent argument to be applied to the Father too. For it will be legitimate to imitate his express words, as follows:>

> If someone says that unbegottenness is in equal measure conjoined with the being of the Father, the argument proceeds similarly, just as it concluded in the case of the Son.[164]

Plainly through the argumentation of its adversaries truly devout doctrine
[p. 248] prevails: | we do not suppose that 'unbegottenness' and 'being begotten' are the same as the essential being, but that these things are attributed to their subject, while the subject is in its own definition something other that they. In that subject no difference is to be found, since the difference between begotten and unbegotten is separate from the being, and there remains absolutely no choice but to concede that the being is identical in both.

We should also raise a further question about what he says:[165] how does he say that begetting (γέννησις) is separated from the Father? Does he consider it as being, or as action? **26.** If he thinks begetting is an action, then surely it is attached equally to the one acted upon and to the one acting, just as in any construction it is possible to observe the action alike in what is being made and in the maker, inseparable from the craftsman and at the same time exhibited in the construction of the products. If on the other hand he says it is separate from the being of the Father, holding that this is the source of the Lord's existence, he plainly regards this as replacing the Father in the case of the Only-begotten, so that he thinks of two fathers for the Son, one Father in name only, the one whom indeed he also calls 'Unbegotten', but who has no part in

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164 This quotation has an odd word-order, and the text may be slightly wrong. But it can now be seen, not as the words of Eunomius, as implied when it runs straight on at the beginning of §25, but as those of Gregory's own hypothetical objector to Eunomius. As Jaeger rightly notes, the focus of Gregory's critique is on the one word 'conjoined' (συνεζεῦχθαι), which Eunomius seems to assent to. In what follows, Gregory sees this as conceding Basil's point that 'begottenness' and 'unbegottenness' are not identical with the essential being of Son and Father, but attributes. If Eunomius did use or assent to the word, he probably thought it implied his own position, that being begotten, or being unbegotten, are the essential nature of Son and Father.

165 These words begin a new topic, based on the quotations in §27 below, and do not refer back to what precedes, as the paragraph arrangement of the Greek text suggests.

begetting, and the one who acts as Father in the case of the Only-begotten, whom he calls 'Begetting'. **27.** This point is better proved from Eunomius' words rather than from our own. He says in the next passage,

> But God, being without begetting, is also before the one begotten;

and shortly after,

> For he who has his being from begetting, before he was begotten, was not.

So if begetting is removed from the Father, and the Son has his being from being begotten, then the Father is inactive in the coming into being (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten, and separated from the begetting, from which the Son has his being. If then the Father is alienated from the begetting of the Son,
[p. 249] then | our wise men are either fabricating another father for the Son by using the title 'Begetting', or are proving by their words that the Son is self-begotten or self-generating. **28.** Do you observe the mental confusion of the one who constantly throughout his own books imputes to us want of learning, how the blasphemy is led astray in many directions, or rather none at all, with no sure way of advancing towards its object? It is like what you can see with infants, when they play childishly, and copy in a bit of sand the structure of buildings: for them the copy does not resemble the original with deliberate skill, but first in their silly way they construct something at random, and then try to decide what they ought to call the building. That is also how I see the clever practice of our wordsmith. **29.** He gathers impious words together as they come to him, like a heap of sand, and then thinks out the blasphemy, whose purpose is unintelligible, springing up through his words of its own accord without any logical sequence. I do not think that he intentionally concocted the reality (ὑπόστασις) of 'Begetting' substituting as father for the being of the Son, nor, in my opinion, was it the orator's purpose to prove that the Father is alienated from the begetting of the Son, nor was the monstrosity of self-generation introduced on any set plan; all such things were thoughtlessly vomited up by our wordsmith, as though one would not be worthy of serious blame if he erred in doctrines, while not knowing (as the Apostle puts it) what he was saying or what he was making
[p. 250] assertions about (*1 Tim* 1.7). | **30.** 'He who has his being from begetting,' he says, 'before he was begotten, was not.' If he says 'begetting' as substitute for 'Father', I too assent, and no one will contradict. For it is possible to say the same thing with either word, whether by saying that Abraham begot Isaac, or by saying instead of 'begot' that he 'became the father' of Isaac. Since therefore to be father is the same thing as to have begotten, if one reworks the terminology

into another form, then fatherhood will be shown to be the same as begetting. If therefore Eunomius is simply saying, 'He who has his being from the Father, did not exist before the Father,' the argument is sound, and we subscribe to the words. **31.** If however he is reverting in his argument to that former begetting, and says it is separate from the Father, and conjoined with the Son, I reckon it is futile to dwell upon the thought of unintelligible things. For whether he thinks of begetting as considered in its own substantial existence (ὑπόστασις), or whether in his thought he is wrenched away by the word towards the non-substantial, so far we have not been able to see from what he has said. The sogginess and baselessness of the argument leads alike to either idea, bending at the whim of the thinker.

§§32–42 Eunomius falsely alleges that the being of the Son is always qualified

32. We have still not reviewed the grievous parts of the blasphemy, which the order of the written text now presents, and we should study the quotation word by word. Yet I do not know how one can dare utter through the mouth the horrible and godless writing of Christ's enemy. My fear is that the trace of poisonous bitterness might be ingested, like some deadly drug, by the mouth
[p. 251] through which the word passes. | 'He who approaches God,' says the Apostle, 'must believe that he is' (*Heb* 11.6). So it is a feature of deity truly to be. Yet he argues that the one who truly is, either does not wholly exist, or does not strictly exist, and that is the same as not existing at all. For one who does not strictly exist, does not exist at all. It is as when one who, out of desire to run, imagines it, and is said to run in his dreams; but because he is falsely acting out the appearance of true running, the dream is consequently not running: although it may inaccurately be called that, it has the name by false designation. He therefore who dares to say that the Only-begotten God either does not exist, or does not strictly exist, is plainly removing faith in him from his teaching. Who will believe any longer in one who is not? Or who will attach himself to the one whose being has been shown by the enemies of the genuine Lord to be invalid, and unreal?

34. In order that our critique of our opponents may not appear in some way fraudulent, I shall quote the actual text of the villains, like this:

> Not existing, nor strictly existing, he says, he who is in the bosom of Him who is, he who is "in a beginning", and who is "with God", though Basil ignores this qualification and predicate, and distorts the title of Him who is, against the truth.

What do you mean? He who is in the Father does not exist, and he who is in a beginning, and is in the bosom, does not exist, merely because he is in a beginning, and is in the Father, and is perceived as in the bosom of Him who is? And the reason he does not strictly exist is that he is in Him who is? **35.** What
[p. 252] strange and irrational doctrines! This is the first time | we have heard this nonsense, that the Lord through whom all things are, strictly does not exist.[166]

And this is not yet the horror, but even more irrational than this, not only does he say he does not exist, or strictly does not exist, but also that he is envisaged as having a composite and complex nature:

> Not being, he says, or not simply being.[167]

Yet when 'simple' is not added to something, 'complex' and 'composite' are apparently attested. How then can the same person both altogether not exist, and be composite in his essential being? We must do one or the other: either affirm his total non-existence, and not call him composite, or claim him as composite and not wipe him out of existence. **36.** But so that their blasphemy may be varied and complex, it jumps on all the godless ideas, now saying that in comparison with what is, he strictly does not exist, now that in relation to what is simple, he forfeits simplicity: not existing, or not simply existing, or not strictly existing. Who of those who have turned from the Word and renounced the faith, was so abundant in expressions for denying the faith, and so strove to defeat the proclamation of divine John? For as often as John ascribes 'was' to the Word, Eunomius always tries instead to attach 'was not' to him that is. **37.** He even quarrels with the holy mouth of our father, making the accusations against him, that Basil ignores these qualifications, because he says that the one who is in the Father and in the beginning and in the bosom, exists, as if such added phrases about the beginning and the bosom ruled out the existence of him who is. What strange lessons the teachers of lies do teach! Of what doctrines they become instructors to their audience! **38.** What is in something, they teach, does not exist. So, because your heart and brain are inside you,
[p. 253] Eunomius, | both of these, according to your rule, do not exist. For if the reason the Only-begotten God does not strictly exist is that he is in the Father's bosom,

166 I have failed to represent Gregory's play on the meanings of κύριος, which regularly means 'Lord', but is also an adjective meaning 'correct', 'exact', and its adverb κυρίως, which we have translated 'strictly'. You could say something like, 'the Authority through whom all things are, authoritatively does not exist'; but it makes poor English.

167 Apparently a further fragment of Eunomius' text, providing opportunity for a rather perverse argument by Gregory.

every thing that is in something is surely wiped out of existence. Yet your heart is in you and not by itself. So on your argument we must say either that it does not exist, or that it does not strictly exist.

39. The want of education in what he has written, and the blasphemy, are so great and of such a kind, that they are obvious, even before we put up an argument, to persons of sense. But so that the stupidity accompanying his wickedness may be made even clearer, we shall add this to our earlier remarks: if it is possible to say that something exists, only when the word of scripture attributes being to it absolutely and without qualification, why do they perish like water-bearers, who have it in their power to drink, but die of thirst? **40.** For he has ready to hand the antidote for the blasphemy against the Son, but shuts his eyes and ignores it, just as though he were afraid of being saved: he alleges that Basil is wrong, because he applies the 'was' without qualification to the Only-begotten. Yet it was quite possible for Eunomius to see what Basil sees, and what every one who has eyes can see. It was, I believe, by prophetic inspiration that the sublime John, in order that the mouths of Christ's enemies might be stopped, when they use these qualifying additions to deny that Christ strictly exists, said that the Word was God, and was Light, and was Life (cf. *Jn* 1.1–4), not
[p. 254] | merely being in the beginning and with God and in the bosom of the Father, in such a way that by this kind of qualification the Lord is deprived of being in the strict sense.

By saying that he was God, he cuts off every way round for those whose minds are running into wickedness, and furthermore, even more important, he proves the evil intent of our opponents. **41.** For if they claim that being in something is a sign of not strictly being, they surely agree that the Father also strictly is not, since they learn from the Gospel that as the Son is in the Father, so too the Father is in the Son, according to what the Lord says (*Jn* 14.10). To say that the Father is in the Son, is the same as saying that the Son is in the bosom of the Father.

In passing we might consider this too. When, according to them, the Son did not exist, what did the Father's bosom contain? They must surely either grant it full, or suppose it empty. **42.** If then the bosom was full, what filled it was surely the Son; but if they envisage a sort of vacuum in the bosom of the Father, they can only be attributing to him completion after some sort of added growth, as he changes from empty and incomplete to full and complete. 'They have no knowledge nor understanding,' says David of those who walk in the dark (*Ps* 81/82.5). One who has declared war on the true Light cannot hold his soul in light. That is why they have failed to perceive the corrective for this wickedness, available to them in logical order, being smitten with blindness like the men of Sodom (*Gen* 19.11).

§§43–58 By denying Christ's eternal lordship, Eunomius makes him a slave

43. He says furthermore that the Son's being is under the lordship of the Father. His actual words are:

[p. 255] | The one who is and lives because of the Father does not possess this rank as his own, since the being which holds even him under lordship attracts to itself the concept of that which is.

If one of the outside philosophers likes to think that, he need not bother about the Gospels and the teaching of the rest of the inspired scriptures: what has Christian thought to do with the philosophy made foolish (cf. *1 Cor* 1.20)? If however he is leaning on scriptural ideas, let him show us a saying from the saints, and we shall be silent. I hear Paul proclaiming, 'One Lord, Jesus Christ' (*1 Cor* 8.6). **44.** But Eunomius contradicts Paul, and calls Christ a slave, for we know no other indicator of slavery than subjection and having a lord. The slave is certainly a slave: but the slave cannot naturally be lord, though he might inaccurately be said to be. Why should I produce texts from Paul to attest the Lord's lordship? Paul's Master himself says to his disciples that he is truly Lord, accepting the confession of those who name him Teacher and Lord. **45.** He says, 'You call me Lord and Teacher, and you speak rightly, for so I am' (*Jn* 13.13). He commanded the same thing to be said by them of his Father too, saying, 'Do not call any one on earth "Teacher", for you have one Teacher, the Christ; and call no one on earth "Father", for you have one Father, the one in heaven' (*Mt* 23.8–10). To which ought we to adhere, caught between these? On the one hand
[p. 256] the Lord himself, and the one who has Christ speaking in him, | tell us that we must not think of him as slave, but honour him as the Father is honoured (cf. *Jn* 5.23). On the other hand Eunomius proposes a certificate of slavery for the Lord, saying that he who holds sway over the universe is subject to lordship. **46.** Is the choice of what we ought to do in doubt? Or is the decision about the more profitable course a narrow one? Shall I, Eunomius, despise the counsel of Paul? Am I to reckon the voice of Truth less credible than your lie? 'If I had not come and spoken to them,' he says, 'they would not have sin' (*Jn* 15.22). Therefore, because he has spoken to them, truly saying that he is Lord, not falsely so called (for he says 'I am,' not 'I am called'), what must he do, for whom the penalty that comes with foreknowledge is inescapable?

47. Perhaps however he will in response to this confront us again with his usual sophistry, and will say that the same person may be both slave and lord, subject to the lordship of his superior, but being lord to everything else. These things are said, bandied about in the streets by the lovers of the lie, who sustain

their own futile ideas about the divine on the basis of human conditions. Because every-day events give us examples of such cases, as when in a well-run household one may see one person more industrious and loyal promoted above his fellow-slaves, acquiring superiority over those of equal rank at the command of his master, they transfer this idea into divine doctrines, so that the Only-begotten God, although subjugated to the power of his superior, is not impeded in his authority to wield power in the government of those inferior to him. **48.** We however should banish this kind of | sophistry, and so far as [p. 257] our understanding permits examine his case. Do they hold that the Father is by nature Lord, or that he came to this by some sort of election? I do not think that any one with any sort of understanding has reached such a point of lunacy that he does not attribute lordship by nature to the God of the universe. That which is simple by nature, without parts or composition, is wholly and completely what it is, not becoming a different thing by some change, but abiding in the state it is in for eternity. **49.** What then is their idea of the Only-begotten? Do they hold his being to be simple, or do they envisage some composition in it? If they reckon him to be a complex thing with many parts, they will surely not concede to him even the title of Godhead, having shifted the doctrine of Christ into material and carnal terms. If however they allow him to be simple, how is it possible to think of the combination of opposites in the simplicity of the subject? For just as the opposition to its contrary of life or death admits no state in between, so lordship is not mixable with servitude, and is alien to it in its characteristics. **50.** No one observing either of these in himself would adopt the same definition for both; and things which have not the same definition will certainly have a different nature. If therefore the Lord is simple in nature, how could there be involved in his person a pairing of opposites, of servitude mixed up with lordship? But if he is confessed as Lord as in the teaching of the saints, the simplicity of the subject | attests him free of any participation [p. 258] in the opposite. If however they declare him a slave, it is useless for them to claim for him also the name of Lord. What is simple in nature cannot be split to allow the opposite characteristics. **51.** If they say he is one thing, but is called another, naturally slave, but nominally Lord, they should broach such a saying openly, and they will save us a lot of work refuting them. For who has so much leisure for futilities, that he will demonstrate with logical arguments matters obvious and beyond dispute? If some one accuses himself as guilty of murder, no work remains for the prosecutors in putting forward proof of blood-guilt by using evidence. Similarly we too shall no longer produce proof against our opponents based on examination of evidence, when they have gone so far in their wickedness. **52.** One who says the Only-begotten God is slave by nature, argues by these words that he is a fellow slave with himself. From this a double

absurdity must necessarily follow: either he will despise his fellow-slave and deny the faith, discarding the yoke of Christ's dominion, or else he will bow down to the slave and, turning from the sovereign and absolute nature, will somehow worship himself instead of God. **53.** For if he sees himself in slavery, and the object of his worship also in slavery, he is simply looking at himself, since he sees another self in the object of his worship. Besides, all the other things, which are necessarily seen in the teaching along with this evil,—what reckoning could possibly be made of them? Every one knows that the slave by nature, being obliged to behave under the constraint of his master, cannot be free from the emotion (πάθος) of fear, since fear is somehow inseparable from the servile nature. The divine Apostle bears witness to this when he says, 'You have not received the spirit of servitude again, so as to fear' (*Rom* 8.15). So just
[p. 259] as with | human beings, they will keep on attributing to God their fellow-slave the emotion of fear.

54. Such then is the god of the heresy. For our part, we who are called, as the Apostle says, for freedom, by Christ who has freed us from slavery (*Gal* 5.13), I will briefly explain what we have been taught to think by the scriptures. Beginning from the divine teaching, I confidently declare, that the divine word does not intend even us to be slaves, since our nature has been transformed for the better, and he that took all that is ours, in order to give what is his in exchange, as with disease, death, the curse, and sin, so too he took up servitude, not so that he himself might have what he took, but so as to cleanse our nature of these things, what belongs to us being annihilated in the pure nature. **55.** So just as there will be in the future life no disease, no curse, no sin, no death, so slavery too will pass with them. That I speak the truth, I call Truth himself to witness, who says to the disciples, 'I no longer call you slaves, but friends' (*Jn* 15.15). If our condition will one day be free from the reproach of servitude, why is the Master of the universe made a slave by the frenzy and madness of these lunatics?—if they are logical, they must surely assert that he is ignorant also of matters concerning the Father, because of the ruling about slaves, which says, 'The slave does not know what his lord is doing' (*Jn* 15.15). **56.** When they say this, they should learn that the Son has in himself all that is
[p. 260] the Father's, and sees all that the Father does, and that none of the | Father's good things is beyond the knowledge of the Only-begotten (cf. *Jn* 16.15; 5.19; 10.15). How could he fail to possess any thing of the Father's, when he has the whole Father within him? If then a slave does not know what his master does, and he has in himself all that is the Father's, let those out of their mind with strong drink sober up and now at last look at the truth, that he who has all that the Father has, is Master of all, and no slave. How can the being (ὑπόστασις), which has no master, have on him the mark of a slave, and the King of the

universe not have the form fitting his rank? Or how does humiliation display true glory?—for slavery is humiliation. Or how is the King's Son born for slavery? **57.** These things are impossible, quite impossible. Rather, as he is Light from Light, Life from Life, and Truth from Truth, so he is also Lord from Lord, King from King, God from God, and Sovereign from Sovereign.[168] Since he has the whole of the Father in him, he surely has in him whatever the Father has; and because all that the Son has belongs to the Father, then of necessity, if indeed the Son is a slave, the Father also is reduced to slavery by the enemies of the glory of God, **58.** for there is certainly nothing attributed to the Son, which is not the Father's. 'All things,' he says, 'that are mine are yours, and yours mine' (*Jn* 17.10). What then will the miscreants say? Which is more plausible, for the Son, who said, 'Mine are yours, and I am glorified in them' (*Jn* 17.10), to be glorified with the royalty of the Father, or the Father to be insulted with the humiliation of the Son's slavery? For it is surely impossible for him who contains in himself all that the Son has, and is himself in the Son, not to be in
[p. 261] the same servitude as the Son, and not | to have slavery in him. These are the things Eunomius achieves by his philosophy: by the way he insults the Lord with slavery, he attaches the same humiliation to the pure glory of the Father.

§§59–64 Eunomius Argues that the Son's being is a derivative honour

59. Let us return to the order of his text. What does Eunomius say of the Only-begotten? 'He does not possess this rank as his own.' The title of 'him that is' he calls a 'rank'. What an absurd bit of philosophy! What human being that ever was, whether among the Greeks or in Barbarian philosophy, who among us, or who at any time, has used 'rank' as a word for 'being'?[169] For with everything observed to be in existence (ὑπόστασις), the common practice of those who use speech is to declare it to 'be', and the term formed from being, which is, 'That which is.' Yet now we have a new usage for what 'That which is' means, the term 'rank'. **60.** He says that the Son, who is and lives because of the Father, does not possess as his own the rank of being, though he has no scripture to produce for the formulation, neither has he advanced his case towards this madness by any syllogism, but as though he had ingested some flatulent food into his guts, he emits the blasphemy unargued and unreasoned like an unpleasant

168 'Sovereign' represents ἀδέσποτος, which means 'having no master over him'.

169 Gregory from here onwards assumes more of the quotation than he has repeated: see §43 above, 'The one who is and lives because of the Father does not possess this rank as his own, since the being which holds even him under his lordship attracts to itself the concept of that which is.'

smell. **61.** 'He does not,' he says, 'possess this rank as his own.' If we grant that 'rank' stands for 'He who is', why does He who is, not possess being? 'Because', he says, 'he exists because of the Father.' Then are you saying that the one who does not possess being, does not exist? For not to possess means the same as to be alienated, and the opposition between the terms is apparent: the possession is not alien, nor the alien possessed. One who does not possess being is therefore surely alienated from being. Yet one alienated from being is not in
[p. 262] being. **62.** The necessity of | this absurdity he infers when he says, 'since the being which holds even him under lordship attracts to itself the concept of that which is.' The unconnectedness of this in terms of continuous prose[170] we need not discuss, but the intention of what is said needs examination. What argument has proved that the Father's being holds the Only-begotten under lordship, when he spues it back over us from his belly-full? Which evangelist supports this thought? What systematic method, which premises, what arguments demonstrate that the Only-begotten God is under lordship, and in what logical order? **63.** 'The being which exercises lordship,' he says, 'attracts to itself the idea of the Son.'[171] What does the 'attraction' of Him who is, mean to him, and why has he tossed into his text the term 'attract'? Any one expert in the meanings of words, will surely decide. This we shall again pass over; but one argument we shall once more take up: he does not allow him in essence to exist, when he does not leave him the title of 'Him who is.' Why does he fight pointless shadow battles, squabbling about the one who does not exist as though he were of this kind or that? The one who is not, is surely neither like any one, nor unlike; yet he concedes the existence, but rejects the word. What empty pettifogging, to concede the larger point, and to fuss over the sound of the word! **64.** And how does the being, which holds the Son under his lordship (as he puts it), attract to itself the concept of that which is? If he is saying that the Father attracts his own being, this attraction is superfluous: being is with him, not attracted. If however he is saying that the Son's being is attracted by the Father, how being will be stripped from him who is, and transferred to the one attracting, I cannot see. Perhaps he is thinking of the error of Sabellius,

170 If this merely means that Eunomius has not expressed himself clearly, Gregory may be right, though we have not enough of Eunomius' text to judge. If however it means that the words are a fragment of a sentence and incomplete, being a genitive absolute construction, the difficulty is created by Gregory's own cavalier methods.

171 Gregory cheats slightly by adding two words to those of Eunomius, as quoted at §43, τοῦ υἱοῦ, so that the reference is specifically to the being 'of the Son'. That is not quite what Eunomius intended. In view of Gregory's own discussion of the point in §64 below, the words may be an interpolation, not originally in the text.

that the Son does not exist in himself, but is graced[172] with the Father's own
[p. 263] personal existence (ὑπόστασις), and that is the meaning for him | of the concept of what is attracted by the being of the one who exercises lordship over the Son? Or perhaps he does not deny that the Son has a personal (ὑπόστασις) existence, but says that what 'He who is,' is removed from him? And how is it possible to separate that which is, from what being means? As long as every thing is whatever it is, then not to be what it is, is against nature.

[p. 264] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Nine**

§§1–25 Eunomius on texts implying that the Lord rejected the Title 'Good'

1. Let us now go on to what comes next in his discourse. He says:

> . . . since the Only-begotten himself yields to the Father the name as rightly due to him alone. For he, who taught that the title "Good" belongs solely to him who is the cause of his own and of all goodness, and who refers to him every thing that is or becomes good,[173] would hardly attribute the rank and the title of "Him who is" to any thing which at some time came into being.

As long as he hid his blasphemy under veils, and led the victims of his fraud unawares by the entanglements of his logic, I thought I ought to give some attention to the unnoticed villainy, and so far as possible expose the threat in my book. **2.** But since he has removed every mask of disguise from the lie, and sets out his blasphemy plainly and literally, I reckon it superfluous to undertake the vain task of confronting with logical proofs those who do not deny their impiety. What more is there left for us to find as proof of his perversity,
[p. 265] such is the immediate implication of what is written by them? | The Father alone, he says, is worthy of the title 'Good', and only to him should such a name be given, since the Son himself concurs that goodness belongs to him alone. **3.** The accuser has presented our defence for us! I may have been thought spiteful in earlier passages by those who come upon them, when I tried to prove that the enemies of Christ argue that the Lord is unconnected with the Father's

172 Literally, 'additionally anointed'.

173 Eunomius plainly has in mind the passage in Mt 19.16–17; Mk 10.17–18; Lk 18.18–19; but it is not clear which of the various readings of this controversial text he has used. See §§11–12 below.

goodness. Now however I reckon that by the confession of my opponents we were not laying such a charge hypocritically against our enemies. For one who says that the title 'Good' is rightly due to the Father alone, and has said that this term belongs solely to him, now publicly displays openly in his book the evil which was in earlier chapters kept under wraps. To the Father alone, he says, belongs the title 'Good'. **4.** Is this with the significance implied by the word, or disjoined from its proper meaning? If he merely attributes the title 'Good' to the Father in an exceptional sense, he would be pitifully irrational, bestowing on the Father the sound of an empty syllable. If on the other hand he supposes that what 'good' means belongs solely to God the Father, then he is to be shunned for his wickedness, since he is restarting the disease of the Manichees in his own doctrines.[174] **5.** Like health and disease, goodness and evil similarly exist as mutually incompatible, so that the absence of the one implies the existence of the other. Therefore if he says that goodness belongs properly only to the Father, he excludes from goodness every other thing perceived to exist apart from the Father, so that the Only-begotten God is also shut out from goodness along with all the rest. For just as, if one says that man is the only thing that laughs, he simultaneously indicates that no other animal shares this property, so one who declares that goodness is solely in the Father, separates all else from the property of goodness. **6.** If then the Father
[p. 266] alone possesses the title 'Good' as his rightful due, as | Eunomius says, such a word is properly attached to no other. Every spontaneous choice surely either exercises itself in accordance with good, or goes along towards its contrary. If then the Father alone is good, having goodness not as something acquired, but by nature, and the Son does not participate in the Father's nature, as the heresy alleges, then he who has no share in the good essential being, is surely at the same time deprived of the title 'good'; **7.** and the one who has no part in either the nature or the title of 'Good', who he is, is well known, though I flinch at the blasphemous name. For it is clear to all, that Eunomius is trying to insinuate what is evil and adverse into the idea of the Son. What name properly belongs to him who is not good, is clear to any person of reason. For just as one who is not courageous is cowardly, and one not just is unjust, and one not wise is foolish, so one who is not good obviously has the contrary title, into which Christ's enemy tries to force the idea of the Only-begotten, becoming another Mani or Bardesanes to the Church.[175] **8.** These are matters of which

174 Mani or Manichaeus (216–276), whose followers were the Manichees, was believed to hold that the universe is governed by two coequal principles of good and evil.

175 On Mani see n. 174 above. Bardesanes or Bardaisan (c. 154–222), was the leading Syrian theologian of his day, but his writings are largely lost. He appears to have held that

we say that our argument is in no way more lucid than silence. One could say ten thousand things and raise every argument, and yet say nothing in their condemnation of the kind that they announce openly themselves. What could be found more bitter in its malice than not to call 'good' the one who, existing in the form of God and not deeming it a prize to be equal with God, but stooping to the humiliation of the human condition (cf. *Phil* 2.6–7), did this solely for love of mankind? **9.** So for what, tell me, are you repaying the Lord
[p. 267] with these things?—I shall use | the phrase which Moses used to the Israelites (*Dt* 32.6). Is he not good, who, when you were lifeless dust, adorned you with God-like beauty, and raised you up as a living image of his own power (cf. *Gen* 2.7 with 1.27)? Is he not good, who because of you took the form of a slave, and for the joy set before him took upon him the sufferings due to your sins, gave himself in exchange for your death, and for our sake was made a curse and sin?[176] **10.** Did not even Marcion,[177] the champion of your doctrines, partially correct you in this respect?—he had in common with your thinking the idea of two gods, and that they differed in nature the one from the other, but more generously claimed goodness for the God of the Gospel; you on the other hand deprive the Only-begotten God also of his natural goodness, in order to surpass even Marcion in the perversity of your doctrines.

11. Nevertheless they defend what is written, and say that they suffer unjustly for the words of the Gospel. They assert that the Lord himself said, 'There is none good save one, God' (*Mt* 19.17 par.).[178] **12.** In order that fraud may carry no weight against the divine words, we shall deal with the Gospel text itself. The story perceives this rich man, to whom the Lord addresses this saying, as young, a person, I suppose, who enjoyed the pleasures of life and loved wealth: it says that he was grieved at the advice to part with his possessions, and did not choose to exchange his goods for life. This man, when he heard
[p. 268] that a teacher of eternal life had come to stay, in hope of perpetual luxury | when his life was extended into eternity, approached the Lord with the flattering address, 'good'; or rather, not perceiving the Lord, but the one appearing in

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the world and mankind were created by inferior gods, and is deemed a dualist in later orthodox writers.

176 Gregory compiles this question from a concatenation of biblical phrases: *Phil* 2.7, *Heb* 12.2, *Gal* 1.4, *Mt* 16.26 (?), *Rom* 7.5, *Gal* 3.13, *2 Cor* 5.21.

177 Marcion, a famous heretic of the earlier 2nd century, held that the God of this world was the flawed and incompetent author of this world and of the Old Testament. Jesus the Saviour was the Son of a higher God of perfect goodness.

178 The words appear in most mss of Matthew, as well as in Mark and Luke. In view of what follows, where the idea of the man as a youth depends solely on the Matthaean version (*Mt* 19.20,22), it is probable that Gregory is following Matthew.

the form of the slave. **13.** He was not a person able to open the curtains of the flesh and discern the hidden depth of his godhead. The Lord therefore, who sees hearts, saw what was the intention of the young man's petition, that the gaze of his soul was not steadily fixed upon the divine, but was softening up the human by calling him 'good', in the hope of learning something by which he might expect to avoid death. Therefore the one he had petitioned answered him suitably. **14.** Because the appeal had not been made to God the Word, the answer consequently came from the humanity to the petitioner, teaching the young man two lessons. In the same place he teaches that one ought to worship Divinity with conduct, and not with fine words, by obeying the commandments and buying eternal life with all one's possessions; and that humanity, by falling into evil through sin, has forfeited the appellation 'good'. That is why he says, 'Why do you call me "Good"?' When he says 'me', he uses the word to refer to the human nature which he wears, but when he testifies to his godhead, by contrast he describes himself as good, the God announced by the Gospel. If the Only-begotten Son is being excluded from the title 'God', it is perhaps no wonder if he is considered to be deprived also of the title 'good'. **15.** Yet if in fact prophets, evangelists and apostles proclaim the godhead of the Only-begotten, and it is asserted by the Lord himself that the title of goodness belongs properly to God, how can the one who shares the godhead not also share the good-
[p. 269] ness? | As to the fact that prophets, evangelists, disciples and apostles confess the Lord to be God, no one is so uninstructed in divine things that he needs a book to learn about these things. Who does not know that in the forty-fourth Psalm the prophet announces in his book Christ anointed as God by God? (*Ps* 44.8/45.7) Again, who is there familiar with the prophecy, who is unaware that Isaiah plainly announces the deity of the Son, among other passages, where he says this: 'Seboim, tall men, will make their way to you, and they will be your slaves, and will attend upon you bound in shackles, and will make vows by you, because God is in you, and there is no God besides you, for you are God' (*Is* 45.14). **16.** For what other God is there that has God in him and is himself God, except the Only-begotten?—let those who do not hear the scriptures tell us! The interpretation of 'Emmanuel' and the confession of Thomas after he recognized him, and the great words of John, I will pass over these as well-known even to those outside the faith. But the words of Paul, too, hardly need precise direct quotation, when he calls the Lord not only God, but 'great God', and 'God over all'. He says to the Romans, 'Theirs are the fathers, and from them is Christ according to the flesh, who is God blessed for ever' (*Rom* 9.5); and to his disciple Titus he writes, 'According to the manifestation of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (*Tit* 2.13). To Timothy he openly announces, 'God
[p. 270] was manifest in flesh, | justified in Spirit' (*1 Tim* 3.16). **17.** If therefore on every

hand it has been demonstrated that the Only-begotten is God, how does he who says that goodness properly belongs to God demonstrate that the godhead of the Son is deprived of this designation, even though the Lord claims goodness for himself in the parable about the men hired for the vineyard? For there, when those who had laboured early resented the equality of wages, and judged the good fortune of the latecomers a wrong against themselves, the just Judge says to one of those complaining, 'Friend, I do you no wrong: did I not agree with you one denarius for the day? Look, you have what is yours. But I also wish to benefit the last as I do you. **18.** Have I not the right to do what I like with my own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good?' (*Mt* 20.13–15) No one will disagree, surely, about this: fair distribution is a proper function of the Judge. But that the Only-begotten God is Judge, all students of the Gospel agree. 'The Father judges none,' he says, 'but has given all judgment to the Son' (*Jn* 5.22).

They still do not give up their statement, however: they say that the addition of 'one' strictly refers to the Father, for it says, 'None is good save one, God.' **19.** So is Truth unsure about its own title? Or is it possible on many grounds to refute with great ease even this false deduction of deceit? For the one who said this of the Father, also addresses these words to the Father: 'All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them' (*Jn* 17.10). If he
[p. 271] says that all that are the Father's are the Son's, and one | of the things attributed to the Father is goodness, then either he has none of them, if indeed he has not this, and they will say that Truth is lying, or if in fact it is improper to suppose that Truth itself has been brought to lie, then he who says that all that the Father has are his, allows that he is not without goodness. For he that has the Father in him, and embraces all that is the Father's, along with everything else plainly possesses goodness. The Son is therefore good.

20. Nevertheless, 'None is good,' he says, 'save one, God' (*Mt* 19.17). This is quoted by our opponents. Neither do I myself reject the saying, yet I do not for that reason deny the deity of the Son. But one who confesses the Lord as God, by that confession surely claims at the same time his goodness. For if goodness is proper to God, and the Lord is God, then the Son is proved by these premises to be good. Yet he says that the word 'one' precludes the Son from participating in the good. It is however easy to show that not even this 'one' separates the Father from the Son. **21.** In all other cases 'one' has a meaning admitting no duality; in the case of the Father and the Son however, the 'one' is not envisaged as singularity: 'I and the Father are one,' he says (*Jn* 10.30). If therefore there is one who is Good, and a oneness is perceived between the Son and the Father, then the Lord, in attesting the unity of goodness, by 'one' claimed this title for himself, since he is one with the Father, and not broken off from the unity of nature. Yet so that the scholarship and learning of our

noble wordsmith may in every way be manifest, let us take note word for word
[p. 272] of the actual composition of what he has written. | **22.** The Son, he says, 'does not attribute to himself the honour[179] of "Him who is",'[180] calling mere being an 'honour'. What skill in correctly matching words to realities! And since he exists 'because of the Father', he says that 'the Father is alienated from him,' for 'the being which holds even him under his lordship attracts to itself the concept of that which is.'[181] This is rather as if one were to say that the bought slave, insofar as he exists, is not that person in his own identity (ὑπόστασις), but is the one who bought him, the identity of his essential being having been assumed into the nature of the one exercising lordship. These are the sublime ideas of the theologian! And what sort of demonstration of his statements is there? 'The Only-begotten himself' he says, 'yields to the Father the name as rightly due to him alone.'[182] Having said that, he makes out that the Father is the only Good. **23.** Where then in these words does the Son refuse the title of 'Him who is'? That is what Eunomius argues, going on with these exact words:

> For he who taught that the title "Good" belongs solely to him, who is the cause of his own and of all goodness, and who refers to him every thing that is or becomes good, would hardly attribute the rank and the title of "Him who is" to any thing which at some time came to be.[183]

What has 'rank' to do with what has been said? And with that, how is the Son deprived of the title of 'Him who is'? I really do not know what it would be better to do about these words, laugh at the ignorance or lament the fatal consequence. **24.** The term, 'his own,'[184] is not selected as is naturally and ordinar-
[p. 273] ily done in use among those who know how to use | a word, but attests his great skill in the art of verbal substitution, a skill which even small children also learn effortlessly with their teachers; and for him to be diverted absurdly from his topic to what has nothing to do with the case and with the formal deduction,[185] while attaching the idea, that the Son does not share the title

179 Eunomius in the full quotation (§1 above and §23 below) uses the word ἐξουσία, which we have translated 'rank'. That word would naturally suit ἀξία, which Gregory has somewhat carelessly used here.

180 This is not a further quotation, but words selected from the passage quoted in §1 and §23.

181 These words are from the passage cited in the previous part, 3.8 §43.

182 See the quotation in §1 above, continued in §23 below.

183 See §1 above.

184 The pronominal adjective σφέτερος, used by Eunomius here, is a rare and somewhat poetic usage, though also found in good prose.

185 Reading τῷ σχήματι.

of 'Him who is', to quite irrelevant arguments, and all that sort of thing, these are composed as though deliberately to be funny, so that those lacking self-control may perhaps be moved to laugh out loud at the disconnectedness of the thoughts. **25.** But for God the Word not to exist or not to be totally good (which he argues when he says that the title of 'Him who is', or that of 'Good', do not properly belong), and to argue that power over things being made is not appropriate for him, these deserve tears and an orchestra of grief.

§§26–41 Biblical texts implying that Christ is an angel

26. It is not even as though, having on some rash and injudicious impulse once somewhere let slip such an utterance, he then corrects the mistake in what follows. In fact he dwells upon the evil, trying to outdo in later parts what he previously said. **27.** He goes on to say that he is as far below the divine nature as the angelic nature falls inferior to his own, not writing this in so many words, but implying such a meaning by what he says. My readers can judge the matter. What he has written is this:

> By being called an angel he clearly taught who it was by whom he announced the words, and who He is, that Is; and by being also addressed
> [p. 274] as God, he showed his own superiority to everything else. For he | that is God to the things made by him is an angel to the God over all.

Anger enters my heart and interrupts my speech; my mind churns with passion, stirred to wrath by these words. **28.** And perhaps such passion in my soul may be forgiven. Whose anger would not boil over at these things, when the Apostle proclaims the whole race of angels subordinate to the Lord, producing in support of his teaching also the loud prophetic voice: 'When he brought the Firstborn into the world, he says, "And let all the angels of God worship him," and, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever," and, "You are the same, and your years shall not fail" ' (*Heb* 1.6–12). When the apostle explains all this as proof of the Only-begotten God, how painful it is for me to hear from Christ's enemy that the Lord of angels is an angel, not just casually dropping such a remark, but insisting upon the enormity, so as to argue that the Lord has no more standing than John or Moses! The word says of the former, 'Behold, I send my angel[186] before your face' (*Mt* 11.10/*Mal* 3.1). So John is an angel. But although the enemy of the Lord calls the Lord 'God', he argues that he is comparable with the deity of Moses, since he too was a servant of the God over all, but was

186 ἄγγελος in Greek means 'messenger', but in biblical texts usually a messenger from God, what we call an angel.

appointed a god to the Egyptians (cf. *Ex* 7.1). Yet even the 'over all', as we have said before, is shared by the Son with the Father, the Apostle having borne just
[p. 275] such a testimony to him, where he says, 'Of whom is the Christ, as regards | the flesh, the God over all' (*Rom* 9.5). This fellow would reduce the Lord of angels to the rank of an angel, as though he had not heard that the angels are 'ministering spirits' and 'flames of fire' (*Heb* 1.7/*Ps* 103/104.4). **30.** That is why the Apostle makes the distinction between the entities unmistakeable and plain, asserting that the subordinate nature is a spirit and fire, while he indicates the sovereign power with the title of deity; and although there are so many who proclaim the glory of the Only-begotten God, Eunomius alone contradicts them and calls him 'an angel of the God over all', by that contrast with the God over all defining him as one of the 'all', while implying that by sharing the same name as the angels he does not differ at all in nature from them. **31.** Earlier he often says this kind of thing: 'Whatever has the same name, cannot be different in nature.' Then does the word of scripture still need correction, about him who explicitly announces that the angelic messenger is uttering, not his own Word, but that of Him who is? By this Eunomius shows that the Word, who is in the beginning, is not himself the Word, but becomes the Word of another Word, becoming his servant and angel. Is there any one at all who does not know that the non-existent is the sole contrary of that which is? So any one who makes the Son contrary to Him who is, is plainly a Judaizer, robbing doctrine of the reality (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten. The one whom he says to be outside the designation 'being', is surely arguing that he is deprived of being. If he concedes being, he will surely not contest the sound of the word.

[p. 276] | **32.** Nevertheless he also tries to support his absurdity with scripture, and proposes Moses as an advocate against the truth. As though arguing from it in his debate with us he details to the best of his ability his own mythology, and says,

> The one that sent Moses was He who is, while the one through whom he sent and spoke, is the angel of Him who is, but God of everything else.

33. The proof that the sentence is not from the text of scripture comes from scripture itself. If however he says that this is the meaning of the text, then we must question the Word who is the primary model of all scripture; and first we should observe that by calling him God of all that comes after him, he accords him no nature higher than angelic. Moses, on hearing that he was a god to Pharaoh, did not quit his humanity, but while retaining his equality in nature was elevated by superiority of rank over his fellows, and being entitled 'god' in no way stopped him from being human. **34.** So in this case Eunomius, having

argued that he is one of the angels, mends such an error with the name of deity in the statement quoted, by a likeness of title making him share the designation of God. Let us again consider the actual words of the blasphemy, setting them out: 'The one that sent Moses,' he says, 'was He who is, while the one through whom he sent, is the angel of Him who is,' which is what he calls the Lord. The wrongness of our wordsmith is therefore proved by the scripture itself, in the passage where Moses prays to the Lord not to appoint an angel to guide his people, but to lead their journey himself.[187] The text reads, attributing the words to God, 'Go on, descend, | and lead this people to the place I [p. 277] told you of, and behold, my angel will go before you on the day when I visit' (*Ex* 32.34). **35.** Again, a little lower he says, 'And I will send my angel before you' (*Ex* 33.2). Then shortly in what follows there comes from the Servant[188] a supplication to God to this effect: 'If I have found favour with you, travel, my Lord, with us' (*Ex* 34.9); and again, 'If you do not travel with us, do not lead me from here' (*Ex* 33.15); then comes the answer of God to Moses, 'This request also which you have made I will perform for you, for you have found favour with me, and I regard you above all men' (*Ex* 33.17). Therefore, if Moses prays against the angel, and the one who delivers the oracles to him becomes the companion and leader of the host, it is clearly demonstrated thereby that the one who made himself known by the title, 'He who is,' (cf. *Ex* 3.13–14) is the Only-begotten God. **36.** If any one objects to this, he will be advocating the Jewish idea, since he does not involve the Son in the salvation of the People. For if an angel does not accompany the Israelites, and the one who is revealed by the title, 'He who is,' is not the Only-begotten, as Eunomius would have it, then nothing but Synagogue doctrines are being transferred to the Church. We are therefore obliged to agree with one of the two: either the Only-begotten God never appeared to Moses, or He that is, from whom the word comes to the Servant, is himself the Son.

He nevertheless contradicts what he has already said by quoting what the scripture itself says:

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187 This is an allusion to God's declaration that he would send an angel to lead the people to the promised land, but not go himself after their sin over the golden calf (*Ex* 33.1–4). At the intercession of Moses, God relented and agreed to go himself after all (33.12–17). Exodus is itself confusing and repetitive, and Gregory quotes passages out of order. Confusion arises partly because the promise to send an angel sometimes implies a promise to come personally and sometimes a refusal; and the narrative mixes the issue of God's accompanying the people with that of appearing personally to Moses.

188 A title of Moses in Exodus 14.31 and other texts.

[p. 278] The term "angel" stands first, | and then is introduced the dialogue with Him who is.[189]

This is not a contradiction, but a ratification of our arguments. For we also state that the prophet, desiring to make luminously clear to mankind the mystery of Christ, uses the name 'angel' for Him who is, so that, with only the title of 'Him who is' appearing in the dialogue, the meaning of what is said might not be referred to the Father; but just as our word becomes the indicator and messenger (ἄγγελος) of the movements of the mind, so too, we say, the true Word, who was in the beginning, as he announces the purpose of his own Father, is named after the action with the message (ἀγγελία), and called a messenger (ἄγγελος). **38.** Just as sublime John first calls him 'Word', and then adds that the Word is God, in order that, with the title 'God' preceding we might not be misled in our thinking towards the Father, so too great Moses, having first named him 'angel', teaches 'Him who is' in the words that follow, so that the mystery relating to Christ might first be openly announced, as by the word 'angel' the scripture teaches about the Word who expounds the Father's purpose, and, by the title, 'Him who is', the affinity of nature as to his actual being between the Son and the Father. **39.** If he should also cite Isaiah as having said that his name is called 'angel of great counsel' (*Is* 9.6 LXX), he will still not overturn our argument that way, for it is clear in that place and undeniable that the human
[p. 279] economy is what is indicated by the prophecy. | 'A child,' he says, 'has been born to us, a son has been given, whose governance is on his shoulder, and his name is called, "Angel of great counsel".' To this, I think, David also was looking when he recounted the setting up of the kingdom, not as though he were not a king, but as though the humble status of slave, which the Lord submitted to in the economy, had been taken up into the royal rank. **40.** 'I have been set up by him as king,' he says, 'on Sion his holy hill, announcing the decree of the Lord (*Ps* 2.6). 'Angel,' therefore, and 'Word', 'Seal' and 'Image,' and all such words, are applied in the same sense to him who makes known his Father's goodness through himself. An angel brings news from someone, and the word similarly reveals the thought lying within, the seal by its own imprint discloses the original (οὐσία), and the image expresses in itself the beauty of what is represented in it. **41.** The reason 'angel' is put ahead of the title, 'Him who is,' is that he is called 'angel' as one bearing news from the Father, and 'He who is' because he

189 As Jaeger points out, Eunomius alludes to the fact that in Exodus 3.2 it is the angel of the Lord who speaks to Moses, and in 3.14 calls himself 'Him who is'. In early biblical narratives 'angel' is often used to denote the personal presence of God, leaving ample ambiguities for the patristic interpreters to deal with.

has no name that makes known his essential being, but transcends the meaning of every name. That is why, according to the Apostle's testimony, his name is 'above every name' (*Phil* 2.10), not as one honoured above all the rest, but because He who really is, is above any name.

§§42–46 Minor logical arguments about the Lord's generation

42. However, I perceive that my book already goes endlessly on, and I am afraid I may appear to be a person chattering away and talking too much, as I extend
[p. 280] the length of my refutation, | even though I am passing over much of the intervening material composed by my opponent, being concerned to avoid extending my book to tens of thousands of words. For the more scrupulous student, lack of conciseness is a ground for complaint, while those whose mind is set, not upon what is necessary, but on the desire for idle and pointless things, yearn to cover many miles of the journey with a few strides. What then ought we to do, when the blasphemy keeps dragging us onwards? **43.** Or perhaps the superfluous and really idle thing is to keep getting involved in the same disputes? For in the argument that follows their whole purpose conforms with what has already been considered, and contains no new argument beyond what has been tried before. If therefore our refutation of what has already been advanced holds good, the remainder is also already disproved by our previous criticisms; but in case to the quarrelsome and stubborn the strongest part seems to lie in what is left out, for their sakes we must deal briefly with what remains.

44. He says that the Lord does not exist before his own generation, though he is unable to show that he is in any respect separated from the Father; and he says this, not relying on some scripture, but arguing the conclusion from his own reasoning. This is declared to be common to all parts of the creation: no frog, no worm, no dung-beetle, no grass, no thorn, nor any of the lowliest beings, existed before its own formation. **45.** So what he argues with sweat and toil by logical deduction in the case of the Son, is presupposed in the case of any and every part of creation, and the great labour of our wordsmith is to
[p. 281] demonstrate that | the Only-begotten God is the same in rank as the lowest orders of creation because of the properties they have in common. So it is quite sufficient indication of the evil of their doctrinal thinking that their notions of the Only-begotten God and of the generation of frogs coincide.

46. Next he says that it is the same in truth and meaning to say, 'Before being begotten, not existing,' as to say, 'Not unbegotten.' Again, my argument applies to this, too, that to say the same of a dog, a flea or a snake, or any of the lower species, would not be wrong, since it is 'the same in truth and meaning' to say that the dog 'does not exist before its generation,' as to say that it is 'not

unbegotten.' If, in accordance with their own stipulation, which they constantly make, things which share the characteristics share also the nature, and it is an attribute of the dog and of every single thing, that it does not exist before it is generated, which is what he thinks he must argue in the case of the Son, the rest of the argument the hearer will surely perceive from the consequence.

§§47–51 Eunomius' absurdities in conceding that Christ is Creator and God

47. He now adopts a more moderate approach in his book, showing him some generosity, and says,

> Not only do we say that the Son is One who is, and above all things that are,

(though a little while ago he was excluding him from the designation, 'Him who is'!)

> but we call him, he says, Lord and Designer[190] and God of every being, whether perceptible or intelligible.

—And that being, does he think it created or uncreated? For if he concedes that the Son is Lord and God and Designer of every intelligible being, it must follow, that if he says it is uncreated, he is wrong in attributing to the Son the designing of the uncreated nature; if on the other hand he believes it created,
[p. 282] he is arguing that he is his own creator.[191] | **48.** If the action of design does not separate intelligible being from that which is in itself uncreated, nothing else will be left to distinguish them, since the perceptible creation and intelligible being are thought of together. He goes on, however:

190 In this passage as elsewhere we have used 'Designer' and 'design' for the Greek δημιουργός and it cognates, rather than 'Craftsman', 'Creator' or 'Demiurge'. All are possible translations, none quite correct.

191 This compressed argument, as often in Gregory, depends on words to be quoted lower down the page. It also depends on Gregory's assumption, that Eunomius holds the Son himself to be created like other creatures. He argues that if Eunomius is saying that the Son creates an uncreated nature, that is self-contradictory. If the Son is regarded as created, in creating 'all things', he created himself, a spiritual (intelligible) being, but not radically distinct from the visible (perceptible) creation; but that is nonsense too.

> In the creation of things that are, to him is delegated by the Father the design of all things, visible and invisible, and providential care for the things made, the ability originally allotted to him being sufficient to bring into being the things designed.

The quantity of writing compels us to run through these things briefly, but the blasphemy imposes constraints on the argument, containing a swarm of ideas, like venomous wasps. **49.** The design of all things, he says, was 'delegated' by the Father. If the discussion were about some craftsman fitting his product at the will of his employer, could we not have used the same language? We do no wrong, if we say the same of Bezalel: that being 'delegated' by Moses with the making of the tabernacle, he became the designer of the things there described (*Ex* 31.1–11), but he would not have come to the work if he had not first acquired the skill by divine power and dared the undertaking on being delegated by Moses. **50.** The term 'delegated' implies that the ability and authority to be Designer was something acquired, as though before the delegation he had neither the courage nor the ability, but when he obtained the authority for his works, and enough ability to carry them through, he then became the Designer of things that are, 'the ability originally allotted to him,' as Eunomius puts it, 'being sufficient to bring into being the things designed.' Is he by some
[p. 283] sort of superstitious horoscope | subjecting the birth (γέννησις) of the Son also to a pre-determined fate, as in the claim made by those who are practised in that vain deceit, that the lot in life of those coming to birth occurs in accordance with the sort of conjunctions and oppositions of the stars, as their revolving motion, borne onwards in continual sequence from of old, produces the various abilities of those who are being born? **51.** Perhaps our philosopher has something like this in mind, and is saying that to him who is 'above all rule and authority and lordship and every title that is bestowed, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come' (*Eph* 1.21), there is originally allotted, as if he were confined in narrow space, ability adjusted to fit to the quantity of things being made. I pass over this part of the discussion for the sake of brevity, though by this short preliminary critique I sow the seeds of understanding of the blasphemy for my more intelligent readers.

§§52–53a Eunomius assimilates the Son's begetting and being to that of creatures

52. In what follows next he has written a sort of defence for us. We shall not be thought by our readers to mistake the meaning of his book and to misinterpret his words in order to condemn him, if his own voice acknowledges the absurdity. The text includes this:

> For did not things that were not become earth and angel?

You see how our sublime theologian is not ashamed to apply the same argument to earth and angels as he does to the Maker of the universe himself! If therefore he thinks the same should be said of the earth and of the Lord, surely he either makes the earth God too, or demeans him with it. **53.** To these words he adds more by which the blasphemy is more clearly exposed, so that the absurdity would not be difficult for a child to understand. He says:

> It would be a large task to explain all the origins and essences of intelligible things, with none of which the non-existent nature has anything in
[p. 284] common, but | their distinction[192] is due to the action of their Designer.

Even if we say nothing, the blasphemy against the Son is manifest and obvious, when he concedes that what is said of every origin and essence does not differ from his account of the divine existence (ὑπόστασις) of the Only-begotten.

§§53b–64 Eunomius rejects the orthodox appeal to sacramental practice

In my view, it would be right to pass over the intervening argument of the blasphemy, as having been somehow refuted already by the criticisms made, and come to the chief heads of the condemnation of their doctrines. **54.** He will be found demonstrating that the sacrament of regeneration is futile, and the sacramental presentation of the gifts unprofitable,[193] and that participation in them confers no advantage on the participants. After those strenuous efforts, in which he puts forward people like Valentinus, Cerinthus, Basilides, Montanus and Marcion[194] in order to slander our doctrine, and having argued

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192 Eunomius perhaps means that the distinctions between various created intelligible beings is determined by the Designer. More likely, he means that all are distinct from non-being. That would make sense, since he might argue that neither their being nor that of the Son of God is compromised by their having originated from nothing. From his riposte it appears that Gregory read the text that way, though he is not very interested in what Eunomius actually meant.

193 Apparently referring to Baptism and the Eucharist.

194 These famous heretics of the second century, with the possible exception of Montanus, are reputed in various ways to have posited an ultimate divine Spirit superior to and distinct from the Creator of the world. Eunomius might have suggested that Basil's and Gregory's negative theology resembles their view. Montanus believed in a new revelation of the Holy Spirit, which might also be taken as denying the true knowledge of God in Christ But this is speculative.

that the title 'Christian' does not properly apply to those who claim that the divine nature is unknowable, and the manner of begetting unknowable, and having included us among those so abused, he proceeds with his own argument in these terms:

> We ourselves, relying on the saints and blessed men, say that the "mystery of godliness" (*1 Tim* 3.16) is not constituted either by the solemnity of the names or by peculiarities of ceremonies and sacramental symbols, but by correctness of doctrines.

55. That he writes this not even then relying on the evangelists, the apostles, or any of those who gave instruction in the older scriptures, is plain to any one who is not ignorant of the holy and divine scripture. It would follow that he supposes he should call 'saints and blessed men' Manichaeus, Nicolas,[195] Coluthus,
[p. 285] | Aetius, Arius,[196] and all those who sing the same tune, whom he follows in making this pronouncement, that neither the confession of the names,[197] nor the ceremonies of the Church, nor sacramental symbols, constitute godliness.

56. For our part, we have been taught by the holy voice that 'unless one is born again by water and spirit, he will not enter the kingdom of God' (*Jn* 3.3), and 'He who chews my flesh and drinks my blood shall live for ever' (*Jn* 6.54), and we believe that by the confession of the divine names, Father, I mean, and Son and Holy Spirit, the mystery of godliness is constituted, and salvation achieved by participating in the sacramental customs and symbols. Doctrines are often investigated for practice by those outside the sacramental mystery, and one may hear many proposing our doctrine as their topic for rhetorical competition, and some of them often coming upon the truth, yet none the less remaining alienated from the faith. **57.** Since therefore he despises the solemn names, by which the power of a more divine begetting apportions grace to those who take part by faith, and disregards the sharing in sacramental

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195 Manichaeus or Mani (see n. 174 above) is the typical dualist, positing a god of goodness and light against the dark god the world. His views were current and dangerous in Gregory's time. Nicolas is presumably the founder of the Nicolaitans attacked in *Rev* 2.6,15, who was regarded as the originator of the dualist heresy by Irenaeus (*haer.* III 11,1).

196 Arius gives his name to Arianism, the principal heterodox movement of the fourth century, which can be seen as dualist in that it distinguishes Christ the Creator from the transcendent Father. Asterius was a skilful advocate of Arius' views. Colluthos was a fellow-presbyter of Arius in Alexandria, who was also an opponent of bishops Alexander and Athanasius, the champions of orthodoxy there.

197 Gregory is probably right to understand Eunomius as referring to the use of the argument of Nicene theologians from the naming of the Holy Trinity in baptism.

symbols and ceremonies, by which Christianity obtains its strength, let us say to those who listen to the falsehood what the Prophet says, with small adjustment: 'How long, you slow of heart? Wherefore do you love destruction and seek falsehood?' (cf. *Ps* 4.3) Why do you not see the persecutor of the faith summoning those who believe him to give up Christianity? For if the confession of the solemn and honoured names of the Holy Trinity is useless, and the ceremonies of the Church valueless, and among these ceremonies are the
[p. 286] sealing, the prayer, the | confession of sins, the willing consent to the commandments, the correction of conduct, the modest way of life, the quest for what is right, not being upset by the passions nor overcome by pleasure nor leaving off virtue,—if he says that no such ceremonies do any good, and that the sacramental symbols do not protect the good things about the soul, as we believe they do, and ward off the things which confront believers through the plotting of the devil, what else is he doing but proclaiming to mankind that he considers the Christian sacrament nonsense, ridicules the solemnity of the divine names, thinks the customs of the Church a mockery, and all the actions of the sacrament nonsense and folly? **59.** What more can those who stick with Greek religion produce to insult our teaching? Do they not also make an occasion for mirth of the solemnity of the names by which the faith is established, and mock the sacramental symbols and the ceremonies observed by the initiates? To think that godliness ought to be thought of as in doctrines alone, whom does that typify more that the Greeks? For they too claim that according to their thinking there is something more convincing than what we preach, and some of them postulate a great God standing supreme above the rest, and profess faith in certain subordinate powers, differing indeed from each other as greater or less by some order and sequence, but all equally subject to their superior. **60.** This then is what the teachers of the new idolatry proclaim, and their followers are not afraid of the condemnation that awaits transgressors, as if they did not understand that to do something wrong in practice is much
[p. 287] more serious than sinning in word alone. Those therefore | who in practice deny the faith, despise the ceremonies, disregard the confession of the names, and judge the sanctification coming from the sacramental signs as worth nothing, but are persuaded to look to cunningly devised words, and think that salvation lies in the verbal logic of 'begotten' and 'unbegotten', what else are they but transgressors against the doctrines of salvation?

61. If any one thinks that these allegations against them are made by us out of malice, let him look at what he has for his own part written, both the things already subjected to our critique and what he puts forward subsequent to these remarks. He says, repealing the law of the Lord (and the law means the tradition of divine initiation), that baptism should not be done into the Father,

the Son and the Holy Spirit, as he commanded his disciples when he passed on the mystery to them, but should be

> into the Designer and Creator, and not only the Father of the Only-begotten, but (he says) his God.

'O he who gives his neighbour foul emetic (*Hab* 2.15)!' Why does he stir up the truth by mixing in mud, and pollute it? Why is he not afraid of the curse appointed for those who add anything to the divine words, or take anything away (*Rev* 22.18)? We read what the Lord says in his own words: 'Go,' he says, 'and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' (*Mt* 28.19). Where is the Son called a creature? Where does the word teach that the Father is creator and designer of the Only-begotten? Where is it taught that the Son is the slave of God in that quotation? Where is the God of the Son announced in the tradition of the sacrament? **63.** Do you see and understand, you who are dragged off by deceit to
[p. 288] destruction, who it is | you have set over your souls as instructor?—he debases the holy scriptures, he changes the divine words, he pollutes with his own slime the purity of the doctrines of true religion, he not only barbs his own tongue against us, but also tries to make alterations in the holy words themselves, he strives to demonstrate that his own perversion is more authoritative than the teaching of the Lord. Do you not yet perceive that he lifts himself up against the name we adore, so that in time the name of the Lord will not be heard, but there will be brought into the churches, instead of Christ, Eunomius? **64.** Do you not yet consider that this godless proclamation has been published in advance by the Devil as a contemplation, preparation, preface, for the coming of the Antichrist? One who strives to prove that his own words are more authoritative than the sayings of Christ, and to alter the faith away from the divine names and the sacramental ceremonies and symbols towards his own deceit, what else will he be rightly called, if not Antichrist?

[p. 289] | **Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*, Part Ten**

§§1–17 The orthodox interpretation of the Lord's words to Mary Magdalene

1. Let us now see what is added to the blasphemy in what follows, which indeed is the chief point in support of their doctrine. Those who reduce the majestic glory of the Only-begotten to mean and servile ideas reckon that the strongest argument for what they say is the word of the Lord to Mary, which he utters

after his resurrection and before his ascension, saying, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God" ' (*Jn* 20.17). **2.** Now the truly religious understanding of these words, in accordance with which we believe they were spoken to Mary, is, I believe, quite clear to those who have received the faith in truth. We shall still also add our own explanation of this in the proper place. Meanwhile it is right to enquire of those who bring such words into debate, what it is that ascends, and is seen, and is recognized by touch, and furthermore belongs to mankind by brotherhood: do they regard it as a feature of the divine, or of the human nature? **3.** For if what is tangible and visible, and nourished by food and drink, physically related and brother to human beings, and all that is observed to refer to corporeal nature,
[p. 290] | is all perceived as also in the godhead, let them say these things also of the Only-begotten God, and let them claim what they like for him, including the action of moving and change of location, which is a feature of things circumscribed by bodies. **4.** If however the one converses with brothers through Mary, while the Only-begotten has no brothers (for how could his unique begetting remain intact among brothers?), and he who says, 'God is spirit' (*Jn* 4.24) is the same as he who said to his disciples, 'Feel me' (*Lk* 24.39), in order to show that while the human nature may be touched, the divine is intangible; and he who said, 'I am going' (*Jn* 16.28),[198] indicates a change of spatial position, whereas he who encompasses all things, he in whom, as the Apostle says, all things were created, and in whom all things consist (*Col* 1.16–17), has nothing in existence outside himself towards which by a movement the change of place can come about. For there is no other way for movement to operate, if that which changes position does not leave the place it was in, and adopt another instead; but what permeates all things, and holds all in its grasp, and is circumscribed by no existing thing, has no place it can change to, being in no respect void of the divine fulness. **5.** Why then do these people abandon the attribution of these words to the perceived phenomenon, and attach them to the divine nature which surpasses all understanding, when the Apostle in his address to the Athenians rejected thinking in this way about God, on the ground that
[p. 291] the divine power is not discovered by touch, but by mental observation | and faith (*Acts* 17.27–29)? **6.** Or again, he that ate before the eyes of his disciples (*Lk* 24.41–43), and who promised that he would go before them in Galilee and be seen there, who is it that he indicates will be seen by them (*Mk* 16.7 etc.)? Is it God, whom no man has seen nor can see, or the bodily manifestation, that is, the form of the slave, in whom God was? If then it is obvious from what

198 Jaeger refers to *Jn* 20.17, but the actual verb does not occur there.

has been said that the meaning of the words points to what is visible, solid, mobile, and akin in nature to the disciples, and that no such thing is perceived connected with what is invisible, incorporeal, intangible and formless, why do they degrade the Only-begotten God, who is in the Beginning, and is in the Father, into equality of rank with Peter, Andrew, John and the rest of the apostles, by saying that they are brothers and fellow-slaves of the Only-begotten?

7. The goal to which their whole effort is directed is this: to prove that, in terms of the majesty of his nature, the Son is as far distant from the rank, power and being of the Father, as he also surpasses the essential being of man, and they claim this saying in support of that idea, because it applies the same terms 'Father' and 'God' equally in relation to the Lord and to the disciples of the Lord, as though no difference of natural rank were envisaged between them, when he is reckoned to be in the same way Father and God both to him and to them. **8.** Something of this kind is the argument of the blasphemy in what follows:

[p. 292]

> . . . that either, through the terms expressing the relationship, sharing of | being between the disciples and the Father is simultaneously attested, or else the Lord himself is not directing us by this expression to sharing the nature of the Father; and just as the fact that the God over all is named 'their God' argues the servile status of the disciples, by the same argument it is conceded by these words that the Son is in servitude to God.

That the words spoken to Mary do not fit the deity of the Only-begotten may be deduced from the very meaning of the words used. **9.** The one who in every way humbled himself to the level of our human littleness, is he who speaks the words. What the actual words mean may be precisely known by those who by the Spirit explore the depths of the mystery (cf. *1 Cor* 2.10). The things however, which have come to our attention through the instruction of the fathers, those I can briefly present. He who is by nature Father of all existing things, from whom they all have their origin, is announced as One by the proclamation of the Apostle: 'One God and Father,' he says, 'from whom are all things' (*1 Cor* 8.6). **10.** Therefore the human nature did not come upon the creation from some other source, nor was it generated among existing things of itself, but it too had as the maker of its own constitution none other than the Father of all things. The very title of Godhead, however, whether it represents the power of oversight or foresight, it possesses in a way that befits the human. For he who
[p. 293] gives beings the ability to exist, | is the God and overseer of the things made by him; but when by the plotting of him who sowed in us the tare of disobedience our race failed to preserve his image of its own accord, but was shamefully

disfigured by sin, it was as a result turned by deliberate assimilation into an evil kinship with the father of sin. Thus the one disowned through his own wickedness no longer had the Good and True as his Father and God, but instead of him who is by nature God, those who were not gods were worshipped, as the Apostle says (*Gal* 4.8), and instead of the genuine Father, the fraudulent one was called father, as the prophet Jeremiah says in a parable, 'The partridge has called, has gathered a brood not her own' (*Jer* 17.11). **11.** It was therefore because the chief feature of our calamity was that humanity had lost its kinship with the good Father and come to be outside the divine supervision and care, that the Shepherd of the whole rational creation, leaving on the heights the unerring and supernal flock, for love of humanity pursued the lost sheep, I mean, our race; for the human race is the last and least fraction, the race which in the figure of the parable was the only one of the rational hundred that went astray through evil (*Mt* 18.12). **12.** So, because it was impossible for our species, exiled from God, to be received back again of its own accord to the high and heavenly place, for that reason, as the Apostle puts it (*2 Cor* 5.21), he who knew no sin becomes sin for us, and liberates us from the curse by making the curse
[p. 294] his own (cf. *Gal* 3.13), and | taking up our enmity to God caused by sin, and, as the Apostle says (*Eph* 2.16), slaying it (and the enmity was sin), and becoming what we are, by himself he re-attached humanity to God. **13.** That new Man, created in accordance with God (*Eph* 4.24), in whom dwelt the fullness of God bodily (*Col* 2.9), him he acquired by purity for kinship of our race with the Father, and drew along with him into the same state of grace the whole race that shared his body and was akin to him. It is this good news which is announced through the woman (*Jn* 20.18), not only to those disciples, but also to all who have become disciples of the word to this day, the news that Man is no longer under banishment or cast out of the kingdom of God, but is again a son, again in his proper place under God, since together with the first-fruits of mankind the whole mass of humanity has also been sanctified. **14.** 'See,' he says, 'it is I and the children God gave me' (*Heb* 2.13/*Is* 8.18); the place from which you departed, when you became flesh and blood through sin, taking you up again he led you back there, he who for our sakes shared flesh and blood. Thus he became also our Father and God, he from whom we had become alienated through rebellion. Therefore the Lord announced the good news of that great benefit in what he said, and the words are not proof of the humiliation of the Son, but the good news of our reconciliation with God. **15.** That which happened to the humanity of Christ,[199] is a grace shared with the race of men; for just as we believe the downward tendency, weighed down to the ground, of

199 Literally, 'to the Man in the case of Christ'.

[p. 295] the body, when we see it carried to heaven, | as the Apostle says that we shall be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air (*1 Thes* 4.17), so too, when we hear that the true God and Father has become Father and God of our Firstfruits,[200] we no longer doubt that the same one has become our Father and God too, when we learn that we shall enter the same place where Christ has entered for our sake as forerunner. **16.** The fact that the grace is reported by a woman is itself in conformity with our interpretation, too. For because, as the Apostle says, 'The woman was deceived and fell into transgression' (*1 Tim* 2.14), and led the way of rebellion against God by her disobedience, for that reason she became the first witness of the resurrection, so that she might correct by her faith in the resurrection the disaster her transgression caused; and just as, having become at the start minister and advocate to her husband of the serpent's words, she consequently brought a beginning of evil upon the world, so, by bearing to the disciples the words of him who had slain the rebellious dragon, she might become a pioneer of faith for mankind, the faith by which appropriately the first sentence of death is revoked. **17.** It may be that experts find a more helpful exegesis of the text. If however none is forthcoming, then surely, in comparison with the one offered, every truly religious person will agree that the one presented by our opponents fails. Theirs has been concocted to demolish the glory of the Only-begotten, and nothing else; but this one contains the purpose of the human economy, for it has been demonstrated
[p. 296] that it was not the intangible, unmoveable, and invisible, but the | seen, moved and touched, that indeed which characterizes the human nature, which gave Mary the command to carry the word to his brothers.

§§18–25 Eunomius interprets the Son's light as less than the Father's

18. A further matter for consideration is the sort of defence he makes against his refutation by great Basil, in which he separates the Only-begotten God by allocating darkness to him. He says,

> As much as the Begotten is separate from the Unbegotten, so is the Light distinguished from the Light.

Basil demonstrated that it was not by some lowering or extension that the begotten differs from the unbegotten, but that there is an absolute contradiction in the meanings, and he drew the conclusion as a result of what had been

200 Jaeger is wrong to note *Jac* 1.18 and *2 Thes* 2.13 as parallels, since there the body of believers is seen as the firstfruits. Gregory speaks of Christ as the Firstfruits of the resurrection of our race, as Paul does in *1 Cor* 15.20–23.

postulated, that if the Father's light differs from that of the Son in the same way that unbegottenness differs from being begotten, then inevitably it is not reduction of light that is attributed to the Son, but absolute alienation from it. For just as you cannot say that being begotten is a diminution of unbegottenness, but the meanings of unbegottenness and being begotten differ totally as contradicting each other, so, if the Father's Light preserves the same distinction from that attributed to the Son, it will follow that the Son will no longer be understood to be Light, since he will be equally excluded from unbegottenness itself and from the Light associated with it; and he who is something other than the Light will consequently plainly belong to its opposite. **19.** The absurdity | having been exposed by these arguments, Eunomius tries to refute them [p. 297] by formal logical demonstrations, in these words:

> For we know, we know the true Light. We know him that made the light after the heaven and the earth. We have heard the very Life and Truth, Christ, saying to his disciples, "You are the light of the world" (*Mt* 5.14). We have learned from blessed Paul calling the God over all "Light unapproachable" (*1 Tim* 6.16), making a distinction by the epithet and declaring the transcendence of the Light. Having then learned such a great difference of light, we shall not allow ourselves even to hear that the meaning of "light" is the same.

20. Is he by these efforts deliberately putting forward such propositions against the truth, or using tricks to test the insensitivity of his followers, whether they can detect the elementary flaw in the logic, or whether they are unaware of such an obvious trick? I do not think any one is so stupid that he does not see the trick over the use of the same word, by which Eunomius deceived himself and those who think like him. The disciples, he says, were called 'light', and what was made at creation is also called 'light'. Who is not aware that the only thing in common is the word, while the meaning in each case differs? The sun's light is visually discerned, whereas the thought in the teaching of the disciples puts the illumination of truth in minds. **21.** If he knows the difference in that light, that the one light is physical, the other mental, we shall no longer have any argument with him, since his *Defence* itself condemns him [p. 298] before we say anything. But if he | cannot find such a difference in the case of that other Light in terms of its operation,—since it is not a matter of one illuminating bodily eyes, the other the intellect, but there is one operation of each of the two Lights operating on the same objects,—how do they demonstrate from the rays of the sun and the apostles' words that the only-begotten

Light and the paternal Light are different? Yet, he says, the Son is called 'true' Light, the Father 'unapproachable'; so these additional epithets make clear the distinct superiority of the paternal light, **22.** for he supposes that 'true' means one thing, 'unapproachable' another. Then who is so silly, that he cannot see that the meanings are the same? The true and the unapproachable are equally repellent of contrary concepts. As truth admits no admixture of falsehood, so the unapproachable does not allow anything contrary to come near. The unapproachable is surely not approachable by evil. But the Son's light is not evil; how could any one see the true associated with evil? Since therefore truth is not an evil, no one can say that the Light in the Father is not approachable even by truth. If it thrusts truth away, it will surely coincide with falsehood. **23.** Such is the nature of opposites, that in the absence of the superior, what is conceived as contrary appears. So if one says he understands that the light in the Father is a long way from the presence of the contrary, he will be interpreting the word 'unapproachable' exactly as the Apostle intended. But if he says that 'unapproachable' means 'alienated from good', it will be implied that he is simply hostile and alien to himself, being both good and opposed to good. This however is impossible: what is good belongs to the Good. **24.** The one
[p. 299] Light is therefore no different from the other, | for the Son is true Light and the Father unapproachable Light. I might even go so far as to say that it would not be wrong to exchange designations of this sort between them. The true is not approachable by the false, and conversely the unapproachable is apprehended in purest truth, for the meaning in both cases alike is that evil cannot come near. **25.** He therefore who cheats himself and those who think like him, what does he conceive to be the difference between these two? There is however a further criticism we should not omit: he produces the saying of the Apostle with a misrepresentation of his wording to suit himself. Paul says 'dwelling in light unapproachable' (*1 Tim* 6.16). There is a considerable difference between saying that he is something, and saying that he is *in* something. The one who says, 'dwelling in light unapproachable', by using the word for dwelling did not refer to him, but to what is around him, and that on our argument is the same as the Gospel verse, which says that the Father is in the Son. For the Son is true Light, and Truth is unapproachable by falsehood; so the Son is Light inapproachable, in which the Father dwells, [or indeed, in whom the Father is].[201]

201 Jaeger deletes the bracketed words as an alternative reading in the manuscripts.

§§26–34 Does the evidence indicate that the Son's Light is less than the Father's?

26. Still he struggles with his vanities, and says,

> From the actual facts and the sayings we believe in, I provide the proof of my words.

(Such is his promise. Whether he proceeds with the argument to suit his promises, the intelligent hearer will surely observe.)

> Blessed John, he says, having said that the Word was in the beginning, and having called him Life, and having then named the Life "Light", a lit-
> [p. 300] tle | further on says, "and the Word became flesh." If then the Life is Light, and the Word Life, and the Word became flesh, it becomes apparent from this that the Light came to be in flesh.

27. What? Because the Light, the Life, God, and the Word were manifested in flesh, therefore the true Light differs from the Light in the Father?—and yet it is attested by the Gospel that even when it was in the darkness it remained unapproachable by the contrary nature: 'The Light shone in the darkness,' it says, 'and the darkness did not grasp it' (*Jn* 1.5). If then the Light had been changed into its opposite and dominated by the gloom when it came to be in darkness, that would have been a strong proof for those who want to show how much this Light differs for the worse as compared with that held to be in the Father. **28.** If however the Word, though it comes to be in flesh, remains Word, and the Light, though it shines in the darkness, is no less Light, admitting no community with its opposite, and the Life, though it comes to be in death, is preserved within itself, and the God, though he is subjected to the form of the slave, does not actually become a slave, but the subordinate is exalted to lordship and royalty, making Lord and Christ what was lowly and human, how does he demonstrate by this the change of the Light for the worse, when both alike remain unchanged for the worse and invariable? He does not even notice that the one who saw the enfleshed Word, who was both Light and Life and God, through the visible glory perceived the Father of glory, and said, 'We have seen his glory, glory as of an Only-begotten from a Father' (*Jn* 1.14).

[p. 301] | **29.** He has however come to the irrefutable argument, which we long since detected as following from what he had said, but is now stated in naked terms: he wants to demonstrate that the essential being of the Son is something

passible and fragile, differing not at all from the material nature subject to flux, so as to demonstrate thereby his difference from the Father. He says:

> If he is able to show the God over all too, who is indeed unapproachable Light, having become enfleshed, or being able to do so, came under authority, obeyed commandments, lived by human laws, or was crucified, let him say that Light is equal to Light.

30. If these things had been alleged by us in our investigations as a consequence of the previous arguments, and they were not substantiated by his words, everybody would have accused us of lying, as if we were in a verbal frenzy exposing the doctrine of our opponents to this charge of absurdity. As it is, there is support for the view that we are with due discretion correcting by the truth the argument of the heresy, in the fact that even they themselves do not leave unmentioned the absurdity which appears in what follows. Look how undisguised and frank is their war against the Only-begotten God, and how his work of loving kindness is reckoned by his enemies an insult and imputation against the nature of the Son of God, as if he had slithered down into life in the flesh and the suffering of the cross, not by deliberate choice, but by his own nature. **31.** It is natural for stone to fall downwards and for fire the opposite, and the substances do not exchange characteristics with each other, so that stone should become airborne and fire be heavy and fall downwards; in just the same
[p. 302] way they argue that | the sufferings are essentially combined with the Son's nature, and for this reason it comes to what is akin and proper to itself, while that of the Father, being free from such passions, remains unapproachable by the assault of evil. For he says that the God over all, who is indeed unapproachable Light, neither became enfleshed, nor is able to do so. **32.** It was enough to make the first of the statements, that the Father did not become enfleshed; as it is, by what is added the argument for absurdity is two-fold: he is either accusing the Son of evil, or the Father of impotence. **33.** If participation in the flesh is an evil, he is affirming the wickedness of the Only-begotten God; if generous kindness is a good, he is demonstrating that the Father is incapable of the good, by saying that he was unable to exercise such grace through flesh. Yet everybody knows that lifegiving power proceeds into operation alike from Father and Son. 'Just as the Father raises the dead,' he says, 'so the Son makes alive those whom he will' (*Jn* 5.21); he refers to us, who have fallen away from true life, as 'dead'. **34.** If then, just as the Father gives life, so also, and in no other way, the Son exercises the same grace, why does God's enemy use his blasphemous tongue against both, insulting the Father as impotent towards the good, and the Son as associated with evil?

§§35–44 Eunomius argues that only the Father's Light is inapproachable

35. 'Nevertheless,' he says, 'the one Light is not equal to the other, because one is called "true", the other "unapproachable".

Therefore the true is reckoned inferior.[202] Why? Indeed, for this very reason the godhead of the Father is deemed to be greater and higher than that of the
[p. 303] Son, because the one | is described in the Gospel as 'true' God (*Jn* 17.3), while the other lacks the adjective. So why does the same word indicate superiority in the concept where godhead is concerned, inferiority in the case of light? For if the reason he says the Father is greater than the Son, is that he is true God, on the same principle the Son will be confessed as greater than the Father, because the one is called 'true' Light, the other is not. **36.** However,

> This Light, he says, effected the works of love of humanity, the other remained inoperative for giving grace of this kind.

A new kind of promotion! They judge the one who performs no works of love of humanity higher than the one who effects them. There never was and never will be such an idea among Christians, whereby it is argued that not every good which there is in beings has its source in the Father. Among those who think aright the chief good in our case is believed to be the way back to life. This however was achieved through the dispensation of the Lord in his manhood, with the Father not inactive and inoperative, as the heresy would have it, holding himself apart at the time of that dispensation. That is not what he shows us, who said, 'He that sent me is with me' (*Jn* 8.29), and 'The Father abiding in me does these works' (*Jn* 14.10). **37.** Why then does the heresy claim the work of grace on our behalf as the Son's alone, and exclude the Father from a share in the thanksgiving for things restored? The return of thanks is naturally owed only to benefactors, and the one who is incapable of giving benefit is surely
[p. 304] not included in the thanksgiving. You see how in every way their | plan to blaspheme the Only-begotten turns back in reverse, with consequent effects on the Father instead. In my view this sort of thing was bound to happen. If 'he who honours the Son honours the Father,' as the divine declaration says (*Jn* 5.23), then conversely efforts against the Son have their consequences for the Father. **38.** I say that, for those who simply accept the message of the cross and resurrection, the same gift of grace should be the subject of equal thanksgiving both to Father and Son, since the Son carried out the Father's will, which is that all mankind should be saved, as the Apostle says (*1 Tim* 2.4); and we should

202 Jaeger punctuates this statement as a question.

equally honour for this grace both the Father and the Son, because salvation would not have come to us, had not the good purpose of the Father through his own Power reached out to us to effect it, and we learn from the Scriptures that the Son is the Power of the Father.

39. Let us look again at what is said:

> If he is able to show the God over all too, who is indeed unapproachable Light, having become enfleshed, or being able to do so, came under authority, let him say that Light is equal to Light.[203]

The purpose of what is said is obvious from the logical structure of the words, namely that he does not think that by his almighty power the Son is capable also of love of humanity of this kind, but that he allowed himself to suffer by crucifixion because he was passible by nature. **40.** I thought about this, and considered the question of where he came upon such ideas about the Deity,
[p. 305] that the Unbegotten | is Light unapproachable by its contrary and thought of as purely passionless and undefiled, while the Begotten is ambiguous in nature, so that it does not retain its deity absolute and pure in impassibility, but has its being combined and commingled with opposites, a being which both yearns for participation in the Good and is diverted towards a disposition subject to passion. Since I could not find in the scriptures the basis for such absurdities, it occurred to me to wonder whether he had admired the myths of the Egyptians about the deity, and mixed in their views in what he thinks about the Only-begotten. **41.** It is reported that they say that their outlandish idol-making, when they attach certain animal forms to human bodies, are a symbol of their mixed nature, which they call a *daemon*,[204] and that this is more refined than human nature and superior in power to our nature, yet does not have divinity unmixed or undiluted, but combined with mental life (φύσις) and corporeal sensation, so that it receives pleasure and pain, none of which is true of the unbegotten God. They too use this concept, attributing unbegottenness to what is, in their thinking, the transcendent God. It seems therefore to us that this clever theologian has brought Anubis, Isis or Osiris from the dark Egyptian shrines into the Christian Gospel, without actually confessing the names; though there is surely no difference in the impiety between one who confesses the names of the idols, and the one who holds these opinions of them in himself, while avoiding the names. **42.** If then they can find no support

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203 Abbreviating the quotation in §29 above.

204 The Greek δαίμων, from which we get the English word 'demon', usually referred to a minor divinity, like a nymph or local god.

for this impiety in the divine scripture, and their argument gets its strength from hieroglyphic symbols, it is surely not difficult to see what men of good
[p. 306] will ought | to think about them.

That we are not making this accusation merely abusively, Eunomius himself would be our witness in his own words, when he says that the Unbegotten is unapproachable Light and not able to enter the experience of sufferings, and states that in the case of the Begotten such a condition is proper and congenital. So man would receive no favour from the Only-begotten God in the things he suffered, if he actually slipped automatically, as they tell us, into the experience of the sufferings, since his passible being would drag him naturally to this, and that merits no thanks. **43.** For who would regard what happens of necessity as a matter for gratitude, even if it were beneficial and helpful? We do not acknowledge the heat of fire or the fluidity of water as a favour, since we attribute what is done to a necessity of nature, for fire cannot quit its heating function, nor water remain stable on a flat surface, but of its own accord gets forward momentum from its sloping situation. So if they say that it was by necessity of nature that the benefit through taking flesh was done by the Son to mankind, they surely acknowledge no favour, because they attribute what he did, not to a power to act freely, but to a necessity of nature. **44.** If however they are conscious of the benefit of the gift and do not honour it, I am afraid their impiety may again go into reverse, and make the passionate status of the Son superior to the passionlessness of the Father, shifting right judgment to the one they regard as Good. For if the Son too, in the same fashion they teach
[p. 307] about the Father, had ended up immune to suffering, | the disastrous state of our race would have remained incorrigible: there would have been none to deliver mankind into imperishable life by his personal experience. Thus unawares the cunning of the sophists, by the arguments it uses to demolish the majesty of the Only-begotten God, advances him towards greater and more honourable notions, if indeed the one who is able to act for good is more honourable than the one who is not.

§§45–54 Eunomius' distinction of Light from Light supports orthodox theology

45. However, I am aware that my book is getting somewhat disorderly. It does not stay in its correct course, but like a hot and headstrong foal is carried away by the arguments of our adversaries towards the absurdities of their position. It must therefore be allowed excessively to defy the rein in order to deal with absurdities. The kindly hearer will pardon the things said, not attributing the absurdity arising from the investigation to us, but to those who lay down bad

principles. It is for us to turn our attention to something else in his writing. **46.** He says:

> He also makes God composite for us, by suggesting that the Light is common, but that they are distinct one from another by certain characteristics and various differences, for what coincides in one shared aspect, but distinguished by certain differences and sets of characteristics, is no less composite.

Our argument with this is brief and easily dealt with. The charge he brings against our teachings, if he did not state it in his own words, is a charge we plead guilty to. Let us note the things he has written. He names the Lord 'true Light', and the Father, 'unapproachable Light'; so he himself has acknowledged
[p. 308] they have light in common, since he so names both. **47.** Since names are | attached to realities, as he stipulates in many places, we do not think it is as a mere word that 'Light' is uttered without meaning in the case of the divine nature, but it designates an underlying reality. Therefore, given the sharing of the name, they are admitting the identity of the things indicated, since when things have the same name, they have declared their natures to be no different. Since then one thing is meant by 'Light', the addition of 'unapproachable' and 'true' on the heretical argument distinguishes the universal by the particulars, so that one Light is thought of as the Father's, the other as the Son's: they are distinguished by their characteristics. He must either abolish the peculiar features, so that what he says does not argue the divinity to be composite, or he should not blame us for things which he can see in his own arguments. **48.** The account does not at all thereby damage the divine simplicity, since being is not community and particularity, in such a way that the combination of these proves the object to be composite. The being in itself, whatever it may be by nature, abides, being just what it is. Any one who has some intelligence would say that these things are what are perceived and understood to apply to them, since it is even possible to observe something in common between the divine nature and us men, but the divine is not therefore humanity, nor the human, deity. **49.** Believing that God is good, we know that this word is used by scripture for mankind, but the particularity of each divides the community arising from the common name; the one, being the fount of goodness, is named after it, while the one who shares that goodness also participates in the name, and God is not composite just because he shares the designation 'good' with man.
[p. 309] | It is therefore plainly to be concluded from this that the definition of what is held in common is one thing, that of the being another; and any composition

or multiplicity in the simple and unquantifiable nature is no more argued on this ground, if one of the things attributed to it is either considered in its particularity or gets the designation because of some common feature.

50. Let us now go on to another of the things he has said, passing over the ravings in between, where he laboriously makes a lot of noise about the Aristotelian classification of beings, and in what we have written elaborates on the kinds and species and distinctions and indivisibles, and deploys all the rest of the technical logic of the *Categories* to attack our doctrines. So leaving that aside, let us take our argument on to his serious point, the most difficult to refute. With the fury of a Demosthenes he has shot his book against us and declared himself another Paianeus from Oltiseris,[205] imitating the orator's sharp shooting in his battle with us. I will quote verbatim our wordsmith's words:

> Yes, he says. but if, since "begotten" is the opposite of "unbegotten", the begotten Light meets the unbegotten Light on equal terms, the one will be light, the other darkness.

The sharpness and accuracy of this antithetical confrontation, any one with leisure may perceive from his words. I would like to ask him who acts our part, either to use our words, or to present his imitation of our speech as closely as possible, or else as he has learnt and is able, to use his book to argue for himself and not for us. For, lest any one of our people be misled in such a way
[p. 310] as | to think that, because 'begotten' is opposite in meaning to 'unbegotten', decline is implied of one from the other. Not every contrary is distinguished by decline, but its opposition consists wholly in the difference indicated, as we might say someone is asleep or not asleep, seated or not seated, begotten or not begotten, and everything else of the same kind, where removing the one means positing its contrary. So just as living is not a declining from not living, but total opposition, so we reckon that having been begotten is not a decline from not having been begotten, but its contradiction and absolute antithesis, so that what is signified in each has nothing in common with the other in any way whether small or large. He therefore who says that what is deemed contrary declines from its opposite must produce the argument in his own name.
53. Our own naiveté tells us that things analogous to opposites differ between themselves to the same extent as their prototypes do. So if Eunomius perceives the same difference in the Light as he does between begotten and unbegotten,

205 Demosthenes, the most famous of the ancient Athenian orators, came from the deme or clan called Paianeus. Eunomius came from Oltiseris in Cappadocia.

I shall respond by using our argument, that as in that case the one part of the contradiction continues to have nothing in common with its contrary, so, if indeed the Light is attached to one side of the antithesis, then its other partner will certainly be shown to be bound up with darkness: the necessity of the antithesis will, on the analogy of what precedes, set the principle of light against its opposite.

54. This is what we, who 'set our hands to writing without training in logic,' as our abuser says, offer rustically in our local dialect to the new Paianeus. As to why he has struggled against this contradiction, shooting at us hot and fire-breathing words with the force of a Demosthenes, let those who enjoy a laugh go to our orator's actual writings. Our own is not too difficult to put into action for refuting the doctrines of the impious, but for poking fun at the ignorance of the uneducated it is quite unsuitable.

PART THREE

Commentary

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Präsentation von *Contra Eunomium* III 1

Volker Henning Drecoll

1 Eigenart und erste Gliederung von *CE* III 1

Das erste Buch von *CE* III nimmt unter den zehn τόμοι insgesamt eine Sonderstellung ein. Gregor zitiert nämlich nach einem knappen Proömium ein ausgewähltes Zitat aus dem Proömium des 3. Buches der *Apologia Apologiae*[1] und entwickelt, von da ausgehend, eine Art Generalabrechnung mit der heteroousianischen[2] Theologie des Eunomius.[3] Dabei verwendet er noch drei weitere Zitate, die jedoch der Auslegung des anfangs angeführten Zitats zugeordnet werden. Das Buch weist also nicht die Struktur auf, dass einfach Zitat nach Zitat an der Argumentation des Eunomius entlanggegangen und jeweils eine mehr oder weniger lange Widerlegung angefügt wird, sondern Gregor geht nach und nach den Aspekten des anfangs angeführten Zitates nach und flicht dabei als Beleg noch weitere Zitate ein.[4] Von den Längenverhältnissen ist sodann der ausführliche, exkursartige Abschnitt über Prov 8 auffällig, der ungefähr ein Drittel des Buches ausmacht, aber nicht unmittelbar Eunomius widerlegt. Das Buch lässt sich insgesamt wie folgt gliedern:[5]

3,1–4,17 Proömium
4,18–10,21 Zitat aus dem Proömium von Apol. Apol. III (Eun.-Zitat: 4,20–25) und Selbstwiderspruch zu einem weiteren Eunomiuszitat (6,6–13)
daran anschließend: 10,22–27,8 Exkurs zu Prov 8,22

1 So die explizite Angabe in *CE* III 1,4 (GNO II 4,18f. Jaeger).

2 Die Bezeichnung „Heteroousianer" hat gegenüber Bezeichnungen wie „Neuarianer" und „Anhomöer" den Vorteil, präziser den theologischen Ansatz des Aetius und Eunomius wiederzugeben, vgl. C. A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God. In Your Light We Shall See Light*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology, Oxford 2008, 21. Aetius und Eunomius haben das Stichwort ἀνόμοιος nicht benutzt, sehr wohl aber betont, dass der Sohn in der οὐσία vom Vater verschieden, d.h. ἕτερος ist.

3 Vgl. Vaggione 116 Anm. 2.

4 Anders Vaggione 116, der nur das erste Zitat dem Proömium zuweist.

5 Vgl. den Gliederungsvorschlag bei B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du* Contre Eunome *avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Namur 1994, 431–433, der sich allerdings nicht an den Eunomiuszitaten orientiert, sondern mit der anonymen byzantinischen Inhaltsangabe vergleichbar ist (Capitulatio, GNO I 9,10–10,6 Jaeger, vgl. die Übersetzung bei Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 452f.)

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27,9–33,22 Erster Rückgriff (Eun.-Zitat teilweise wiederholt in 27,23–26): Zeugung und οὐσία
33,23–41,18 Zweiter Rückgriff: ἡ τοῦ υἱοῦ προσηγορία (dabei: neues Eun.-„Zitat" in 35,2–5) darin: 38,17–41,18 Exkurs: Die Transzendenz der göttlichen οὐσία
41,19–46,10 Dritter Rückgriff (Eun.-Zitat wiederholt in 44,6–13 und 44,21–25),
daran anschließend: 46,11–50,5 Die Entwertung des Sohnestitels durch Eunomius (incl. neues Eun.-Zitat, ebd. 46,21–47,16)
50,6–51,13: Abschluss und Überleitung zu *CE* III,2

2 Das Proömium

Das Proömium ist mit dem von *Ad Eustathium* sowie mit dem von *Ad Ablabium* vergleichbar. Mit ersterem verbindet sich die Wahl eines Berufes (bei Eustathius ist es naheliegenderweise der Arztberuf, in *Contra Eunomium* III,1 der des Wettkämpfers), mit *Ad Ablabium* ist insbesondere die Kampfesmetaphorik vergleichbar. Ein Wettkämpfer hat zwei Möglichkeiten, den Kampf zu beenden, so dass der Gegner gewinnt, nämlich entweder gibt er auf oder er fällt drei Mal. Die letztere Möglichkeit erlaubt nun den Vergleich mit dem dritten Buch, wobei Gregor behauptet, Eunomius sei durch die ersten Bücher schon zweimal umgeworfen worden.[6] Das dritte Buch soll also jetzt den endgültigen Sieg besiegeln (an dieser Stelle verlautet nichts von einer Ankündigung eines vierten und fünften Buches). Gegen das von Eunomius vertretene ψεῦδος (3,8.13.20) bzw. seine ἀπάτη (3,11) stellt Gregor die ἀλήθεια (3,8.20, 4,2.9), die Hoffnung auf den Sieg, und die κακοτεχνία der Schläge des Gegners stacheln ihn dabei nur noch an. Gregor verzichtet, so sein rhetorisches Eingeständnis (ὁμολογοῦμεν … 3,16), auf die besondere Anwendung von Rhetorik und Dialektik, vielmehr möchte er sich auf zwei Dinge beschränken, nämlich zum einen den ἀληθινὸς λόγος und zum anderen den morschen Charakter (σαθρότης) der gegnerischen Argumentation, die sich selbst widerspricht und in sich zusammenfällt.[7] Eunomius' Argumentation enthält, so Gregor, bereits in sich die ἀνατροπή (3,13, 4,6; dies sagt Gregor wohl bereits im Vorblick auf das von ihm ausgewählte Zitat aus dem Proömium des dritten Buches der *Apologia Apologiae*, das Gregor zufolge eine Reihe von Aussagen impliziert, die Eunomius' Theologie insgesamt widerlegen). Abschließend ernennt Gregor die Leser zu Schiedsrichtern, die zwischen ἀσέβεια und εὐσέβεια zu

6 *CE* III 1,1 (GNO II 3,1–16 Jaeger).
7 *CE* III 1,2 (GNO II 3,16–4,5 Jaeger).

entscheiden hätten.[8] Der Gebrauch des Plurals ἡμεῖς ist wohl rhetorisch bedingt, verweist aber zugleich darauf, dass Gregor nicht nur für sich spricht, sondern auch für Basilius und die von ihm sowie Basilius vertretene theologische Richtung. Eunomius wird erneut eindeutig negativ qualifiziert: Seine Argumentation ist eher ein τοῦ λόγου εἴδωλον (4,8), er ist der Gegner bzw. Feind (ἐχθρός 4,16 neben ἀντίπαλος 4,12), dem ψεῦδος, ἀπάτη und ἀσέβεια (4,15) zugeordnet werden. Aufweis der inneren Widersprüchlichkeit[9] und Darlegung der Wahrheit sind die beiden Grundziele der folgenden Argumentation.

3 Die Struktur der Widerlegung

Das von Gregor an den Anfang gestellte Zitat ist ein Paukenschlag. Denn in ihm scheint Eunomius nicht weniger zuzugestehen, als dass man Christus als Sohn zu bezeichnen hat und die Zeugungsvorstellung angemessen ist, und zwar im Hinblick auf die φυσικὴ τάξις und die Offenbarung (τοῖς ἄνωθεν ἐγνωσμένοις ἐμμένοντες).[10] Gregor führt dieses Zitat an, um zu zeigen, dass Eunomius sich selbst in Widersprüche verwickelt.[11] Dazu paraphrasiert er zunächst das, was Eunomius' Aussage (seinem Verständnis nach) impliziert[12] und stellt dem dann ein Zitat aus einem späteren Abschnitt[13] gegenüber, das die Widersprüchlichkeit sogleich zeigen soll. Für Gregor hat Eunomius mit seiner Aussage zugegeben, dass a) der Sohnestitel auf den μονογενὴς θεός im eigentlichen Sinne passt, und zwar aufgrund der φυσικὴ τάξις und dass b) hierauf auch der Schriftgebrauch verweist. Damit hat Eunomius eine zentrale Wahrheit zugegeben, so dass dann, wenn in seinem Werk andere Aussagen dem widersprechen, sie mit Sicherheit der Wahrheit widersprechen (5,23–25).

Das Zitat, das Gregor dem gegenüberstellt und das den Widerspruch zeigen soll, entstammt einem späteren Zusammenhang und begründet die Bezeichnungen ποίημα und κτίσμα auf drei Ebenen: a) der φυσικὴ κρίσις, b) der πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσις τῶν πραγμάτων und c) der τῶν ἁγίων χρῆσις. Das (aus dem Kontext isolierte) Zitat besagt nicht ausdrücklich, dass die Bezeichnungen

8 *CE* III 1,3 (GNO II 4,9–17 Jaeger).

9 Vgl. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ,* Namur 1994, 78f.

10 *CE* III 1,4 (GNO II 4,18–25 Jaeger).

11 *CE* III 1,4 (GNO II 5,4–7 Jaeger).

12 *CE* III 1,5f. (GNO II 5,9–6,2 Jaeger).

13 Dass zwischen den beiden Zitaten eine längere Textpassage liegt, geht *aus CE* III 1,7 (GNO II, 6,3–6 Jaeger) hervor.

ποίημα und κτίσμα auf den Sohn bezogen werden sollen (doch ist dies im Duktus der eunomianischen Theologie sehr wahrscheinlich). Dementsprechend beginnt Gregor seine Widerlegung damit, dass er zugibt, dass dies als Beschreibung des Verhältnisses zwischen Schöpfer und Schöpfung durchaus stimmt.[14] Für den Fall, dass Eunomius dies jedoch auf den eingeborenen Sohn beziehen möchte, stellt Gregor die Rückfrage, welche τῶν ἁγίων χρῆσις hierfür angeführt werden könne.[15] Unter dem Gebrauch der Heiligen versteht Gregor dann die Autoren der Schrift (also nicht die kirchliche Tradition), ein biblischer Beleg, den Sohn als Geschöpf und Machwerk zu bezeichnen, existiere nicht.[16] Schon ein Blick auf die im Johannesprolog benutzten Wendungen und die Aussage, dass alles durch ihn geworden ist (Joh 1,3), zeigen dies (Gregor fügt auch noch χαρακτήρ und ἀπαύγασμα aus Hebr. 1,3 hinzu).[17] Eunomius kann sich auch nicht darauf berufen, dass diese Bezeichnungen homonym auch für die Schöpfung gebraucht würden, insofern bleibt er laut Gregor den Schriftbeleg schuldig.[18]

Im Sinne einer Prosopopoiie formuliert Gregor dann den Einwand, dass Prov 8,22–25 dies eben sehr wohl besage. Hierauf folgt ein langer Exkurs, der sich mit Prov 8 beschäftigt (s. dazu unten 4.a). Der Exkurs zur Auslegung von Prov 8,22 richtet sich gezielt gegen eine Strömung, deren Meinung in der 3. Person Plural referiert wird. Diese Gruppe wird als οἱ ἐχθροὶ τῆς ἀληθείας qualifiziert, die zugleich ἀσεβεῖς und συκοφάνται sind.[19] Die Notiz, dass diese Meinung widerlegt ist, die Gegner also keine Aussage (φωνή) der Heiligen vorbringen können, durch die der Eingeborene als Geschöpf erwiesen ist,[20] verbindet Gregor mit einer Wendung aus dem anfangs genannten Eunomiuszitat (26,27f.) und bereitet damit die Rückkehr zur Auseinandersetzung gezielt mit Eunomius vor, der dann auch wenig später (27,9) genannt wird. Der Abschluss des Exkurses zu Prov 8,22 weist darüberhinaus die genannte Doppelstruktur (Refutation und Affirmation) auf, da auf das Fazit, dass ein biblischer Beleg für die Qualifizierung als κτίσμα nicht existiert, eine kurze affirmative Erläuterung

14 *CE* III 1,8 (GNO II 6,13–25 Jaeger).

15 *CE* III 1,9f. (GNO II 7,1–13 Jaeger).

16 *CE* III 1,11f. (GNO II 7,14–8,2 Jaeger), vgl. M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique. Étude des rapports entre le langage et la connaissance de Dieu*, Études augustiniennes, série Antiquité 99, Paris 1983, 72f.

17 *CE* III 1,12–14 (GNO II 8,2–26 Jaeger).

18 *CE* III 1,15–20 (GNO II 8,27–10,21 Jaeger).

19 *CE* III 1,64 (GNO II 26,11–20 Jaeger). Der Einwand ist also nicht direkt auf Eunomius' Entgegnung auf Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 2, zu verstehen, wie Vaggione 116 meint.

20 *CE* III 1,65 (GNO II 26,20–28 Jaeger).

der eigenen Position folgt: Der Sohn ist laut der Taufgeschichte im Evangelium [Mt 3,17 parr.] der υἱὸς ἀγαπητός, er hat die φυσικὴ οἰκειότης, ist [entsprechend dem Nizänum] wahrer Gott aus wahrem Gott und hat alles, was für den Vater angenommen wird, weil beide eins sind [vgl. Joh 10,30].[21]

Die Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomius geht dann davon aus, dass bereits als Resultat erreicht ist, dass sich in Eunomius' Denken ein eklatanter Widerspruch festmachen lässt: Auf der einen Seite behaupte Eunomius, man müsse διὰ τὸ γεννηθῆναι von einem Sohn sprechen, auf der anderen Seite sage er, man müsse ihn διὰ τὸ κτισθῆναι nicht mehr Sohn, sondern ποίημα etc. nennen. Natürlich plädiert Gregor dafür, sich für die erste der beiden widersprüchlichen Aussagen zu entscheiden. Als Beleg greift er dann auf das anfangs bereits angeführte Zitat aus dem Proömium zurück. Dies wird der Ausgangspunkt einer längeren Argumentation, in der Gregor aus dem Begriff ἡ γεννηθεῖσα οὐσία abzuleiten versucht, dass Eunomius sehr wohl Gezeugtsein und οὐσία unterscheide (weil seine Redeweise eben a) die οὐσία als solche voraussetzt und diese dann b) als gezeugte qualifiziert). Dabei kündigt er an, dass er diesen Gedanken mit mehr Mühe (φιλοπονώτερον) entfalten will, und zwar in zweifacher Hinsicht: a) Zum einen soll die Argumentation als in sich selbst schlecht erwiesen werden, b) zum anderen soll erwiesen werden, dass die Argumentation als καθ' ἡμῶν gerichtet nicht überzeugt.[22] Es lässt sich fragen, inwiefern Gregor diese Ankündigung realisiert. Zunächst wendet er sich dem Aufweis zu, dass die Argumentation des Eunomius schlecht gemacht ist: κακουργία bzw. κακουργεῖν (28,10.11). Dann wird gesagt, dass die Schwäche der Argumentation (scil. gegen Basilius und Gregor) genau dadurch gezeigt werden soll, wodurch auch die κακουργία gezeigt werden soll. Insofern reduziert sich die „Doppelstrategie" eigentlich auf den Nachweis, dass Eunomius in sich widersprüchlich sei. Genau dem entspricht das weitere Vorgehen, in dem Gregor die Widersprüchlichkeit der eunomianischen Theologie aufzuweisen versucht, und zwar in mehreren Schritten:

a) Dass Eunomius die οὐσία von dem Gezeugtsein (entgegen seiner Intenion) doch unterscheidet, wenn er von einer οὐσία γεννηθεῖσα spricht, verdeutlicht Gregor an zwei Beispielen: der Unterscheidung von Geburt und Frau aus dem biblischen Beispiel in Joh 16,21[23] und dem Beispiel von Adam und Abel, das eine entsprechende Argumentation des Basilius weiterentwickelt

21 *CE* III 1,65 (GNO II 26,28–27,8 Jaeger).

22 *CE* III 1,68 (GNO II 28,6–11 Jaeger).

23 *CE* III 1,70–72 (GNO II 28,25–29,26 Jaeger).

(Adam ist nicht gezeugt, Abel und Adam stimmen in ihrer φύσις überein, obwohl Abel gezeugt ist, Adam aber nicht).[24]

Der Bezeichnung des Eingeborenen als γεννητός geht Gregor abschliessend nach, bevor er die Argumentation bündelt. Natürlich ist die Zeugungsvorstellung in der Trinitätslehre in zwei Bereichen von der menschlichen Zeugung zu unterscheiden: zum einen sind alle fleischlichen Vorstellungen auszublenden, sodann ist jegliche διαστηματικὴ ἔννοια abzulehnen, womit Gregor hier insbesondere die zeitliche Vorstellung meint, die bei Gott nicht gegeben ist. Dies bezieht Gregor dann gerade auf das Vater-Sein Gottes, das er als Ursprung weiterer Abstrakta deutet: Wenn Gott Vater ist, und dieses Vater-Sein bedeutet, dass von ihm alles Leben, alle Wahrheit, Weisheit, Licht, Heiligung, Kraft etc. stammt, dann bedeutet die Annahme, dass Gott irgendwann nicht Vater war (weil der Sohn erst später entstanden ist), dass Gott irgendwann ohne Leben, Wahrheit, Weisheit etc. bestand. Insofern würde durch diese Annahme ein Mangel an Gutem auch für den Vater angenommen bzw. der Vater „entehrt".[25]

Mit der Notiz, dass durch das Gesagte ἡ ἀτονία τῆς κακουργίας aufgewiesen sei, schließt Gregor diesen Abschnitt ab.[26] Dabei rekapituliert er seine Argumentation noch einmal: Der Gegensatz zwischen ungezeugter und gezeugter οὐσία lässt sich nicht aufrechterhalten, weil a) die οὐσία auch von Eunomius von dem Ungezeugtsein/Gezeugtsein unterschieden wird (wenn auch gegen die Intention des Eunomius), b) die Differenz zwischen ungezeugt und gezeugt keineswegs eine Differenz in der φύσις zwingend notwendig macht, wie das Adam-Abel-Beispiel zeigt, sondern sich umgekehrt durch die Zeugungsvorstellung ausdrücken lässt, dass der Sohn alles ist, was der Vater ist: er ist Licht aus Licht, wahrer Gott aus wahrem Gott, womit erneut auf das Nizänum (oder auch das Nizäno-Konstantinopolitanum) zurückgegriffen wird (der Ausdruck πίστις in der Wendung κατὰ τὸν ἁπλοῦν τε καὶ ἰδιωτικὸν τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς πίστεως λόγον [33,14f.] kann dabei sogar als Bezeichnung des Glaubensbekenntnisses verstanden werden).[27]

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24 *CE* III 1,73–76 (GNO II 29,27–31,3 Jaeger), vgl. J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 46, Leiden 2000, 98–101. Vgl. *CE* II 491 (GNO I 369,22–30 Jager); zu Adam vgl. Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* I 15 (SC 299, 226,19–35 Sesboüé), der allerdings, da es ihm um das Pädikat ἀγέννητος geht, Abel nicht nennt.

25 *CE* III 1,77–82 (GNO II 31,4–32,23 Jaeger).

26 *CE* III 1,83 (GNO II 32,24–29 Jaeger).

27 *CE* III 1,84f. (GNO II 32.24–33.17 Jaeger).

Eine polemische praeteritio (Gregor wolle natürlich sich nicht länger damit beschäftigen, mit welchem Ziel [σκοπός] Eunomius seine unsinnige und in sich widersprüchliche Theologie entwickle)[28] stellt dann die Überleitung zu einem neuen Thema dar, das dann in einem weiteren Schritt zu dem Thema der Sohnestitulatur führt. Die grundlegende Frage ist dabei die, ob die κατὰ φύσιν σχέσις den entsprechenden Gebrauch der ὀνόματα mit sich bringt (33,26f.). Gregor greift dazu auf das anfangs angeführte Eunomiuszitat zurück, in dem ein nachgestellter Genitivus absolutus sagt, dass die gezeugte οὐσία und die Sohnesbezeichnung die so beschaffene σχέσις annehmen (scil. dass man den Sohn γεννητός und γέννημα[29] nennen muss und damit nicht nur eine periphere Eigenschaft angibt, sondern den Bereich der φύσις selbst). Dieser Genitivus absolutus τῆς γεννηθείσης οὐσίας καὶ τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ προσηγορίας τὴν τοιαύτην τῶν ὀνομάτων οἰκειουμένης σχέσιν ist aus mehreren Gründen schwer verständlich, erst recht ohne den direkten Kontext des Satzes im Duktus des Eunomius, der nicht erkennbar ist: Zum einen fragt sich, welche σχέσις genau gemeint ist, worauf also das Attribut τοιαύτη verweist. Zum anderen ist das Partizip οἰκειουμένης schwer verständlich. Da das Verb ein Akkusativobjekt, eben σχέσιν, bei sich hat, ist die Form als Medium zu interpretieren und analog zu Wendungen wie λόγον οἰκειοῦμαι oder auch συγγένειαν οἰκειοῦμαι zu verstehen: sich aneignen, sich zu eigen machen, annehmen, aufweisen.[30] Im Deutschen ist der sprachliche Zusammenhang mit τὸ οἰκεῖον schwer („zu eigen") oder gar nicht ausdrückbar. Genau auf diesen Zusammenhang zielt aber Gregors Rückgriff auf das Eunomiuszitat: τὴν σχέσιν οἰκειοῦμαι (4,24f. = 34,14f.) heißt dann σχέσιν ἔχειν τινὰ πρὸς ἄλληλα καὶ οἰκειότητα (34,2f.; vgl. auch τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐνδείκνυμι 36,1f.). Gregor liest also das Eunomiuszitat als Beleg dafür, dass zwischen der οὐσία und der προσηγορία eine Relation besteht, die auf die Zusammengehörigkeit (οἰκειότης) verweist. Vorausgesetzt ist, dass Eunomius annimmt, dass die Bezeichnungen als γεννηθεῖσα οὐσία bzw. als Sohn (was allerdings in einem besonderen Sinne zu verstehen ist, dazu unten) unmittelbar auf eine Relation im Bereich der φύσις verweisen. Für Eunomius folgt daraus

28 *CE* III 1,86f. (GNO II 33,17–25 Jaeger).

29 Basilius hatte das Neutrum γέννημα strikt als unbiblisch abgelehnt, vgl. V. H. Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea. Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner*, FKDG 66, Göttingen 1996, 124. Das wirkt sich auch bei Gregor dahingehend aus, dass er den Begriff nur selten und ausschließlich im Kontext der Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomius in *CE* II 1–2 benutzt, vgl. F. Mann, „γέννημα", *Lexicon Gregorianum* 2 (2000), 122f.

30 Vgl. F. Mann, „οἰκειόω", *Lexicon Gregorianum* 6 (2007), 683–685, 684.

natürlich, dass sich an diesen Bezeichnungen die Verschiedenheit der οὐσία bzw. φύσις zeigen lässt.

Gregor dreht das Argument um: Wenn tatsächlich ein Zusammenhang zwischen Bezeichnungen und Wesen/Natur besteht, dann müsste sich eigentlich genau das Gegenteil von dem ergeben, was Eunomius vertritt, nämlich der Aufweis der Zusammengehörigkeit des Wesens. Aus der τῶν προσηγοριῶν οἰκειότης kann man dann auf das τὸ κατ' οὐσίαν οἰκεῖον schließen (33,27–34,1). Diese Polemik soll erweisen, dass Eunomius wider Willen mit dem, was er sagt, genau das erweist, was er bekämpft, er wird ein συνήγορος ἐξ ἀνάγκης τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς οὐσίας.[31] Dies belegt Gregor gerade für den Sohnestitel mit einem weiteren Eunomiuszitat, bei dem allerdings nicht ganz eindeutig ist, ob die *Apologia Apologiae* wörtlich zitiert wird (denkbar wäre auch ein Referat, das Gregor selbst in Anlehnung an eine Eunomiusstelle formuliert hat). Dieses Zitat bzw. Referat verweist auf die Selbstbezeichnung Christi als υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου und gibt Gregor Gelegenheit, in knappen Sätzen eine Christologie zu entfalten (s. dazu unten 4.b). Damit wird jedoch nicht ein neuer Argumentationsstrang anhand eines neuen Zitats eröffnet, vielmehr kehrt Gregor anschließend zu seinem Rückgriff auf das anfangs genannte Eunomiuszitat zurück (36,1–5) und versucht, plausibel zu machen, inwiefern sich aus dem von Eunomius hergestellten Zusammenhang zwischen Namen und Wesen/Natur eigentlich die besondere wesenhafte Zusammengehörigkeit von Vater und Sohn ergibt. Dabei greift Gregor neben verschiedenen Beispielen auch auf das Beispiel des Weines und des Weinstocks zurück, das er in verschiedener Hinsicht ausdeutet. Die wesenhafte Zusammengehörigkeit (τὸ κατ' οὐσίαν οἰκεῖον) bezieht er schließlich auf die ὑγρότης, die beide verbindet.[32] Dies stellt die Frage, was denn in der Trinität für die entsprechende wesenhafte Zusammengehörigkeit anzunehmen wäre—und das wiederum führt Gregor dazu, ausführlich darzulegen, wieso sich die göttliche οὐσία nicht begrifflich beschreiben lässt. Der Exkurs über die Transzendenz[33] (s. dazu unten 4.c) soll demnach ein mögliches Missverständnis ausräumen, das nämlich auch für Gregor ein unmittelbarer und essentieller Zusammenhang zwischen den Bezeichnungen und dem Wesen bzw. der Natur existiert.

Das Ende dieses Exkurses signalisiert Gregor deutlich, indem er sagt, dass er nun wieder die ἀκολουθία aufnehmen wolle.[34] Nach einer kurzen Wiederholung

31 *CE* III 1,89 (GNO II 34,15–18 Jaeger).

32 Vgl. Athanasius, *c. sent. Dion.* 10,4 (Athanasius Werke 53,15–21 Opitz); Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 69.

33 *CE* III 1,103–110 (GNO II 38, 17–41,18 Jaeger).

34 *CE* III 1,111 (GNO II 41,22 Jaeger).

des bisher Erreichten führt Gregor dann ein mögliches Argument der Gegner an, das er nicht Eunomius zuschreibt, sondern nur als Prosopopoiie einführt: ἐρεῖ γὰρ ἴσως ὁ τοῖς ἐναντίοις ἰσχυριζόμενος ὅτι … (42,11f.). Das Gegenargument besagt, dass der Sohnestitel bzw. die Bezeichnung als γέννημα keineswegs die Zusammengehörigkeit im Bereich der Natur (scil. mit dem Vater bzw. Erzeuger) erweist, da ja in der Bibel auch vom τέκνον ὀργῆς (Eph 2,3), dem ἀπωλείας υἱός (Joh 17,12) und dem γέννημα ἐχίδνης (Mt 3,7) die Rede ist. Ähnliches ließe sich auch für entsprechend positive Aussagen sagen, etwa wenn von den υἱοὶ φωτός (Joh 12,36), den υἱοὶ ἡμέρας (1.Thess 5,5) oder den τέκνα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ (Mt 3,9) die Rede ist.[35] Gregor widerlegt dies, indem er zwischen der Sohnschaft ἐκ φύσεως und der erworbenen Bezeichnung als Sohn unterscheidet und dies ausführt.[36] Eine solche erworbene Sohnschaft ist aber in dem anfangs angeführten und jetzt erneut angeführten Eunomiuszitat, das im Zentrum steht, nicht gemeint, da hier nicht eine übertragen zu verstehende (κατὰ μεταφοράν) Bezeichnung vorliegt[37] und es sich bei Gott nicht um einen Bereich handelt, der veränderlich ist. In diesem Zusammenhang trifft Gregor wiederum interessante Aussagen zur Christologie bzw. zur Inkarnation[38] (vgl. unten 4.b).

Im Gegenzug wirft Gregor Eunomius vor, er entleere den Sohnestitel und entkleide ihn seiner eigentlichen Bedeutung. Als Beleg hierfür zitiert Gregor ein langes Zitat aus der *Apologia Apologiae*,[39] das er anschließend auslegt.[40] Dabei geht er auch etwas grundlegender auf die christologischen Bezeichnungen ein (s. dazu unten 4.d).

Ein kurzes, abschließendes Résumé stellt Eunomius noch einmal vor eine Alternative: Entweder bleibt er bei dem, was in dem anfangs angeführten Zitat gesagt ist, dass man nämlich von einem Sohn und Gezeugten zu sprechen hat, und der Sohnestitel gerade etwas aufweist, was zur οὐσία gehört, dann spricht das deutlich gegen die Qualifizierung als κτίσμα und ποίημα, oder man bleibt eben bei dem letzteren. Gregor möchte eine spezifische Auslegung des Sohnestitels nicht gelten lassen und erblickt in dem Bezug auf die Selbstbezeichnung Christi als υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου nur eine Vermengung (σύγχυσις) bzw. einen besonderen Trick.

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35 *CE* III 1,113–115 (GNO II 42.11–43.3 Jaeger).

36 *CE* III 1,116–118 (GNO II 43.3–44.5 Jaeger).

37 *CE* III 1,119–121 (GNO II 44,6–45,1 Jaeger).

38 *CE* III 1,121–125 (GNO II 45,1–46,10 Jaeger).

39 *CE* III 1,127–129 (GNO II 46.21–47,16 Jaeger). Vaggione 117 Anm. 7 sieht in den Eunomiusbezug einen klaren Bezug auf Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 2 (SC 305, 12,1–16,40 Sesboüé), und zwar aufgrund einer Reihe von in beiden Passagen benutzten biblischen Wendungen.

40 *CE* III 1,131–138 (GNO II 46.11–50.5 Jaeger).

4 Theologische Inhalte

a *Die Auslegung von Prov 8,22 und die Schrifthermeneutik*

Prov 8,22 als Beleg für die Qualifizierung des Sohnes als κτίσμα führt Gregor auf die Vorkämpfer (πρόμαχοι) der Häresie zurück. Er greift also nicht auf einen entsprechenden Text des Eunomius zurück,[41] sondern verweist auf eine allgemein-„arianische" Konzeption.[42] Dass in Prov 8,22 mit der σοφία Christus

41 Vgl. M. Cassin, „Contre Eunome III: L'exégèse structure-t-elle l'argumentation?", in: M. Cassin – H. Grelier (eds.), *Grégoire de Nysse: La Bible dans la construction de son discours, Actes du Colloque de Paris, 9–10 février 2007*, Études Augustiniennes, série Antiquité 184, Paris 2008, 73–88, 77f. (anders hingegen von M. Van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie dans les livres Contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse: textes scripturaires controversés et élaboration théologique", in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du Colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 Septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 169–193, 179 sowie Vaggione 116 Anm.5, der annimmt, das Eunomius auf Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 2 [SC 305, 12,1–16,40 Sesboüé] mit dem Zitat von Prov 8,22 und 1. Kor 1,24 geantwortet habe). Dies wirft die Frage auf, ob Gregor a) *Apologia* 26 (70, 15f. Vaggione) kannte (oder evtl. nur die Zitate aus Basilius' *Adversus Eunomium*), b) das in einigen Handschriften angefügte Bekenntnis (von Vaggione als *Apologia* 28 gezählt, wo Prov 8,22–25 ausdrücklich angeführt und ganz im Sinne der Auslegung des Arius gedeutet wird) kannte (vgl. *Apologia* 28, 74,20–24 Vaggione mit Arius, *Urkunde* 6,3f., 12,9f.; 13,9f. Opitz). Die Authentizität dieses Textes ist jedoch sehr fraglich, vgl. Vaggione, Introduction 16. In der *Apologia* greift Eunomius interessanterweise öfter auf die Bezeichnungen γέννημα und ποίημα zurück (*Apologia* 12, 46,18–48,1; 17, 54,10.13; 18, 56,10 Vaggione), ohne jedoch explizit einen Bezug zu Prov 8 herzustellen. Zwar sagt Eunomius auch, dass man den Begriff κτίσμα nicht ablehne (*Apologia* 18, 4,1–4 Vaggione), doch auch hier wird kein Bezug zu Prov 8 hergestellt. Insofern hatte Gregor vielleicht tatsächlich keinen Text von Eunomius vor Augen, der Prov 8,22 ausdrücklich dafür benutzt hat, um die Bezeichnung des Sohnes als κτίσμα zu belegen (obwohl natürlich die Verwendung von Prov 8,22–25 deutlich im Hintergrund der Eunomiuszitate in *CE* III 1,4.7 [GNO II 4,22; 6,12f. Jaeger] steht).

42 Auch Markell von Ankyra und Athanasius hatten bereits eine arianische Auslegung von Prov 8,22 vor Augen, die sie unspezifisch einer Gruppe in der 3. Plural zuwiesen, vgl. Markell, fragm. 9 Klostermann (GCS *Eusebius* IV, 186,32: ὥσπερ αὐτοὶ νομίζουσιν; nicht genauer erkennbar ist, ob damit Asterius gemeint ist); Athanasius, *Or. c. Ar.* II 44,1 (Athanasius Werke I 1,2; 220,1–4 Tetz). Van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie", 184 verweist außerdem auf Eustathius von Antiochia, fragm. 128 (CChr.SG 188,1–189,12 Declerck), der den Begriff ὁδός auf die ἡ κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον περιβολή bezieht, ἀλήθεια und ζωή auf die φύσις des Vaters (eventuell wendet sich dies auch gegen eine entsprechende „arianische" Exegese von Prov 8,22, thematisiert aber, jedenfalls in dem erhaltenen Ausschnitt, nicht das besonders strittige Wort ἔκτισεν). Anfang der sechziger Jahre scheint Prov 8,22 nach wie vor in der Diskussion gestanden zu haben, vgl. Theodoret, *h.e.* II 31,7f (GCS 172,2–7

gemeint ist, belegen die Gegner Gregor zufolge mit 1.Kor 1,24, so dass sie Prov 8,22 als direkte Aussage des eingeborenen Gottes, dass er selbst geschaffen sei, auffassen. Für die Widerlegung dieses Beleges stellt Gregor in Aussicht, eine Auslegung vorzulegen, durch die der Glaube keinen Schaden nimmt. Zugleich werden die Aussagen aus den Proverbien als αἰνίγματα bezeichnet.[43] Die Widerlegung erfolgt in mehreren Schritten:[44]

I: Erstens ist die Gattung der Proverbien zu berücksichtigen: Als παροιμίαι werden gerade Aussagen bezeichnet, die nicht direkt und vordergründig zu verstehen sind.[45]

II: Der vorangehende Kontext in Prov 8 verlangt ein übertragenes Verständnis.[46]

III: Der unmittelbare Kontext (Prov 8,21a-25) verlangt ebenfalls ein übertragenes Verständnis, genauso wie die folgenden Verse, insbesondere ist ein wörtliches Verständnis von Prov 8,26–29 unsinnig.[47]

IV: Das eigene Verständnis von Prov 8 wird skizziert: Prov 8,22 bezieht sich auf die κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον οἰκονομία, und zwar in drei Schritten:

IVa: Die Weisheit verweist prophetisch auf das Heilswerk Christi.[48]

IVb: Prov 8,22 beschreibt nicht das Verhältnis des Eingeborenen zum Vater, sondern die Inkarnation.[49] Dass mit der geschaffenen Weisheit der Inkarnierte gemeint ist, zeigt die Parallele zwischen Röm 13,14 und Eph 4,24 (Christus als der neue von Gott geschaffene Mensch, den die Christen anziehen sollen); eine Abwägung, ob die Auslegung von Prov 8 durch die Gegner oder in diesem

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Parmentier/Scheidweiler), vgl. H.C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer. Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 73, Tübingen 1988, 71–74 sowie die bei Epiphanius, *Pan. haer.* 73,29–33 erhaltene Predigt des Meletius über Prov 8,22 (*Pan. haer.* 73,31f.; GCS *Epiphanius* III, 305, 30–306,10 Holl); vgl. Drecoll, *Trinitätslehre*, 12f.; F. Dünzl, „Die Absetzung des Bischofs Meletius von Antiochien 361 n.Chr.", *JAC* 43 (2000), 71–93; T.R. Karman, *Meletius von Antiochien. Studien zur Geschichte des trinitätstheologischen Streits in den Jahren 360–364 n.Chr.*, Regensburger Studien zur Theologie 68, Frankfurt a.M. 2009, 75–134. Vgl. zu Prov 8,22 im 4. Jh. M. DelCogliano, „Basil of Caesarea on the Primacy of the Name ‚Son'", *Revue des études augustiennes et patristiques* 57 (2011), 45–69, 47–57.

43 *CE* III 1,22 (GNO II 11,8–16 Jaeger).

44 Vgl. die Gliederung des Abschnittes durch van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie", 182 Anm. 1.

45 *CE* III 1,23–27 (GNO II 11.16–13.18 Jaeger).

46 *CE* III 1,28–31 (GNO II, 13,18–14,24 Jaeger).

47 *CE* III 1,32–40 (GNO II 15.1–18.4 Jaeger).

48 *CE* III 1,41–47 (GNO II 18.5–20.7 Jaeger).

49 *CE* III 1,48–56 (GNO II 20.8–23.27 Jaeger).

von Gregor vertretenen Sinne „frömmer“ ist, führt Gregor zufolge zu einem eindeutigen Ergebnis.

IVc: Auch der unmittelbar folgende Kontext (Prov 8,26–34) ist übertragen auf das Leben des Gläubigen zu beziehen.[50]

Den Exkurs schließt Gregor mit dem Ergebnis ab, dass die Gegner keinen Schriftbeleg aufweisen können. Dies führt dann zur Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomius zurück.[51]

I: Die Berücksichtigung der Gattung der Proverbien wird auf zwei Hinweise im Bibeltext gestützt, nämlich zum einen den Titel παροιμίαι, zum anderen die einleitenden Worte des Buches, die als programmatisch aufgefasst werden. Für den Titel παροιμίαι zieht Gregor, gleichsam im Sinne einer Konkordanzarbeit, die Verwendung des Wortes im Neuen Testament heran, wo der Begriff im Johannesevangelium auftaucht (Joh 10,6; Joh 16,25.29). Damit würden im Evangelium die αἰνιγματώδεις τε καὶ ἀσαφεῖς ῥήσεις bezeichnet, die neben dem vordergründen (κατὰ τὸ πρόχειρον) noch einen verborgenen Sinn (κατὰ τὸ κρυπτόν) haben bzw. neben dem „geraden“, d.h. direkten (ἐπ’ εὐθείας) noch einen „schrägen“, d.h. indirekten (κατὰ τὸ λοξόν bzw. διὰ πλαγίας ἐμφάσεως).[52] Dem Buch der Proverbien kommt dieser Titel nun insgesamt zu (das Buch heißt eben nicht γνῶμαι, συμβουλαί oder διδασκαλία σαφής, sondern παροιμίαι).[53] Dies lässt sich auch mit dem Proömium des Proverbienbuches stützen: In Prov 1,1 verweist die Reihenfolge σοφία und παιδεία Gregor zufolge darauf, dass nicht die normale Erziehung gemeint sei (die ja der Weisheit vorangehen müsste), sondern die, die sich ἐκ τῆς παροιμίας ergibt. Sodann spricht Prov 1,3 davon, dass die Gedanken die Intention (σκοπός) offenlegen (ἐκκαλύπτω), und zwar διὰ στροφῆς. Damit ist Gregor zufolge die Offenlegung des verborgenen Sinnes gemeint (genauso wie Paulus in Gal 4,20 ankündigt, von der ἱστορία zur τροπικὴ θεωρία übergehen zu wollen). Gregor verdeutlicht dies durch den Vergleich mit dem Pfauenschwanz, der—unentfaltet—unschön und unförmig ist, zum Halbkreis entfaltet aber eine besondere, vielfarbig glänzende Schönheit bietet. Genau eine solche „Entfaltung“ sei mit der τοῦ λόγου στροφή gemeint.[54]

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50 *CE* III 1,57–63 (GNO II 24.1–26.11 Jaeger).

51 *CE* III 1,64f. (GNO II 26.11–27.8 Jaeger).

52 *CE* III 1,23 (GNO II 11,16–26 Jaeger). Auch Athanasius betont den Charakter der παροιμίαι, bei denen man nicht einfach τὴν πρόχειρον λέξιν annehmen dürfe. Er zieht Joh 16,25 heran und spricht davon, dass man das πρόσωπον feststellen müsse, von dem aus der einzelne Vers jeweils gesagt ist, vgl. Athanasius, *Or. c. Ar.* II 44,2f (*Athanasius Werke* I 1,2; 220.4–221.13 Tetz).

53 *CE* III 1,24 (GNO II 11.26–12.20 Jaeger).

54 *CE* III 1,26 (GNO II 21–13.9 Jaeger).

Damit hat Gregor die methodische Voraussetzung für die folgenden Abschnitte geschaffen. Es ist jeweils davon auszugehen, dass der Proverbientext nicht vordergründig zu verstehen ist, sondern auch eine verborgene Sinnebene aufweist. Dies wird nicht damit begründet, dass für die Schrift immer mehrere Bedeutungsebenen anzunehmen sind, es handelt sich also nicht um eine allgemeine Begründung für eine allegorische Auslegung der gesamten Schrift,[55] schon gar nicht in einem Nebeneinander von Schriftsinnen,[56] sondern um die Berücksichtigung der Gattung παροιμίαι.

II: Die Anwendung dieses Prinzips geht davon aus, dass kein Abschnitt aus dem Proverbienbuch ἀνεξετάστως τε καὶ ἀθεωρήτως verstanden werden soll, darunter liegt (ὕπεστι) immer die κατὰ ἀναγωγὴν θεωρία. Wenn das bei den Stellen schon der Fall ist, die auf den ersten Blick verständlich erscheinen, ist dies erst recht für die undeutlichen Stellen der Fall.[57] Im Hinblick auf den Kontext (σύμφρασις) betrachtet Gregor zunächst die vorangehenden Verse, und zwar die direkte Rede der Weisheit ab Prov 8,12. Gregor stellt hierzu zunächst Aussagen aus Prov 8,12–21 zusammen, wobei er mit Prov 8,15 und 16b endet (Prov 8,16a wird ausgelassen).[58] Nach der kurzen Bemerkung, dass diese Verse offensichtlich nicht ἀνεξετάστως verstanden werden können, deutet er die drei Bezeichnungen aus Prov 8,15.16b: Mit den βασιλεῖς (Prov 8,15a) seien nicht alle (de facto ja mitunter auch schlechten) Könige gemeint, sondern die, die zur βασιλεία Gottes gehören, also die πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι (Mt 5,3). Mit den δυνασταί (Prov 8,15b) seien die gemeint, die etwas gegen die πάθη vermögen und nicht der Herrschaft der Sünde dienen. Mit der hier positiv gemeinten (ἐπαινετή) Tyrannei (vgl. τύραννοι in Prov 8,16) ist die συμμαχία der Weisheit gemeint, die dabei hilft, gegen die Demokratie der Affekte die Monarchie des Verstandes zu etablieren.[59]

III: Nach einer Übergangsbemerkung[60] zitiert Gregor zunächst Prov 8,21a (was hier nicht die erste Hälfte von Prov 8,21 meint, sondern den Zusatzvers zwischen Prov 8,21 und Prov 8,22), also den unmittelbar vorangehenden Vers. Dabei stellt er einen Zusammenhang zwischen der Protasis von Prov 8,21 (ἐὰν ἀναγγείλω) und Prov 8,22 (benutzt als Apodosis) her (unter Überspringung von Prov 8,21aβ). Diese Zusammenstellung (σύνταξις) wirkt wie eine Verfremdung

55 Dies nimmt M. N. Esper, *Allegorie und Analogie bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Habelts Dissertationsdrucke. Reihe Klassische Philologie Heft 30, Bonn 1979, 15f. an.

56 Cf. van Parys, *Exégèse et théologie*, 170.

57 *CE* III 1,27 (GNO II 13,10–18 Jaeger).

58 *CE* III 1,28f. (GNO II 13,21–14.3 Jaeger).

59 *CE* III 1,29–31 (GNO II 14,5–24 Jaeger).

60 *CE* III 1,32 (GNO II 15,1–6 Jaeger).

(ξενισμός), verweist also auf einen tieferen Sinn.[61] Dies zeigt auch die Abfolge von Prov 8,22–25 (was vollständig zitiert wird). Gregor hebt hier nur die Abfolge κτίζεται—θεμελιοῦται—γεννᾶται hervor.[62] Prov 8,26 spricht von der Erschaffung des bewohnten wie des unbewohnten Landes. Gregor bringt dies mit Prov 8,22 zusammen: Der κύριος, der die Weisheit geschaffen hat, ist derselbe, der die Länder erschaffen hat. Dies ist aber laut Joh 1,3 der Sohn, also kann mit der σοφία in Prov 8,22 kaum der Sohn als Schöpfungsmittler gemeint sein.[63] Die Verse Prov 8,27–29 wörtlich zu verstehen, würde dazu führen, etwas anzunehmen, was ganz eklatant den πράγματα widerspricht: Denn das bewohnte Land liegt ja nicht an den höchsten Orten unter dem Himmel. Vielmehr ist allgemein bekannt, dass die Menschen an dem Ort wohnen, der weder zu viel noch zu wenig Wärme hat, weder zu trocken noch zu feucht-kalt ist, also dem μέσον τῆς γῆς.[64] Die Zuweisung dieser Vorstellung an Poseidonios (vgl. app. fontium) ist wohl kaum haltbar,[65] es handelt sich wohl um eine recht weit verbreitete Ansicht, die in unterschiedlichsten Kontexten und Formen auftauchen kann. An dieser Skepsis gegenüber einer Zuweisung an Poseidonios ändert auch die Tatsache nichts, dass Gregor im folgenden noch über die flüchtige Natur des νέφος in einer Weise spricht, die mit seinen Ausführungen im Hexaemeron vergleichbar sind.[66] Die Aussagen des unmittelbaren Kontextes und der nachfolgenden Verse sind, so das Fazit, keineswegs vordergründig (ταῖς κοιναῖς καὶ προχείροις ἐννοίαις) zu verstehen.[67]

IV: Anschließend entwickelt Gregor sein eigenes Verständnis der Verse. Die Auslegung ist dabei deswegen nicht ganz einfach darzustellen, weil sie in mehreren Schritten vorgeht (also keine geschlossene Deutung von Prov 8 vorlegt).

IVa: Die Auslegung wird eingeleitet, indem festgehalten wird, dass Prov 8,22 genausowenig vordergründig zu verstehen sein wird wie der Kontext. Eine vollständig befriedigende Auslegung des Verses wird dann nur denen möglich sein, die τὰ βάθη kennen und die göttlichen Mysterien im Geist auszusprechen wissen—wovon sich Gregor selbst unterscheidet (παρ' ἡμῶν δὲ), seine

61 *CE* III 1,33 (GNO II 15,7–17 Jaeger).

62 *CE* III 1,34 (GNO II 15,17–23 Jaeger), vgl. M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse*, 270f.

63 *CE* III 1,34–36 (GNO II 15.24–16.14 Jaeger).

64 *CE* III 1,37–39 (GNO II 16.15–17.8 Jaeger).

65 Entsprechend taucht der Text nicht in neueren Fragmentesammlungen auf, so z.B. weder bei *Posidonius, The Fragments*, L. Edelstein – I. G. Kidd (eds.), Cambridge 1989 noch bei *Posidonio. Testimonianze e frammenti. Testo latino* [*sic!*] *a fronte*. Introduzione, traduzione, commentario e apparati di Emmanuele Vimercati, Mailand 2004.

66 *CE* III 1,39f. (GNO II 17,8–18 Jaeger); *Hex.* 34f. (GNO IV/1, 47,7–48,5 Drobner).

67 *CE* III 1,40 (GNO II 17,19–18.4 Jaeger).

Auslegung kann lediglich versuchen, den σκοπός der Aussage nicht gänzlich im Dunkeln zu lassen.[68]

Dann nähert sich Gregor dem Text, indem er sagt, dass σοφία im vollen Sinne nur gegeben ist, wenn auch die Gabe der Prophetie vorhanden ist.[69] Die Weisheit, die Salomon besitzt und die auf Gott zurückgeht, umfasst dann wohl auch die Gabe der Prophetie. Entsprechend lässt sich Prov 9,1, wo davon die Rede ist, dass die σοφία sich ein Haus baut, als Prophetie auf die Inkarnation beziehen.[70] Das Haus meint dann die menschliche Seite, die darin wohnende Weisheit die Gottheit, ganz so, wie sich auch bei dem Evangelisten (wohl Johannes) Aussagen teilweise auf das Menschliche, teilweise auf das Göttliche beziehen.[71] Ergebnis: Prov 8 umfasst das ganze τῆς οἰκονομίας μυστήριον— sowohl die göttliche Seite als auch die menschliche Seite. Zu der göttlichen Seite gehören demnach die vorweltliche Kraft und Tätigkeit, für die Joh 1,3 ebenso steht wie Prov 8,27–29 (zum θεμελιόω vgl. Prov 8,29, zur Bereitung der Himmel vgl. Prov 8,27], und die Begründung der Tugend, die Gregor in Prov 8,12 ausgedrückt sieht: Die Weisheit lässt den Willen, die Erkenntnis und das Denken „zelten". Dazu kommt dann die menschliche Seite.[72]

IVb: Da Gott nichts als Geschaffenes (und damit als nachträglich „Herangebrachtes" [ἐπείσακτον]) hat, kann man alle die Dinge, die zur Fülle Gottes gehören, also das Sein des Sohnes bei dem Vater, das Sein des Logos ἐν ἀρχῇ, das Licht, das Leben, die Weisheit nicht auf Prov 8,22 beziehen, denn dann hätte Gott erst nachträglich δύναμις, σοφία etc. erhalten.[73] Daher ist die Aussage aus Prov 8,22 ἔκτισέ με auf die geschaffene Natur zu beziehen (die Annahme der menschlichen Natur wird hier mit dem Terminus ἀνακραθῆναι bezeichnet).[74]

Das stellt die Frage, wie nun für ein und dieselbe Gestalt die vorweltliche Gründung der Erde wie das Erschaffensein (im Sinne der Annahme

68 *CE* III 1,41f. (GNO II 18,5–17 Jaeger).

69 *CE* III 1,42f. (GNO II 18,17–25 Jaeger).

70 *CE* III 1,43f. (GNO II 18,25–19,19,8 Jaeger), vgl. M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse*, 270. Auch Athanasius hatte den Bezug auf die Inkarnation durch die Heranziehung von Prov 9,1 belegt, vgl. Athanasius, *Or. c. Ar.* II 44,4 (*Athanasius Werke* I 1,2; 221,18–21 Tetz). Die Auslegung Gregors ist allerdings gegenüber der des Athanasius sehr selbständig. Mit Basilius' Auslegung, der neben dem Hinweis auf den rätselhaften Charakter des Proverbienbuches insbesondere auch die LXX-Variante ἐκτήσατο ins Feld führt (vgl. dazu Drecoll, *Trinitätslehre*, 80f.), ist die Argumentation Gregors kaum vergleichbar.

71 *CE* III 1,45 (GNO II 19,8–18 Jaeger).

72 *CE* III 1,46f. (GNO II 19,18–20,7 Jaeger).

73 *CE* III 1,48f. (GNO II 20,8–21,5 Jaeger).

74 *CE* III 1,50 (GNO II 21,5–7 Jaeger).

der menschlichen Natur) gesagt werden kann. Hierfür erkennt Gregor einen gewichtigen Grund: Die Menschen haben die ursprüngliche ἐντολή und durch ihren Ungehorsam das Gute überhaupt vergessen, und deswegen verbindet sich jetzt die Ankündigung der Heilstat (durch die Inkarnation) mit der Erinnerung an die Schöpfungstat. Es geht also nicht um ein neues Evangelium, sondern um die εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις der Menschen.[75] Weil der erste Weg (auf den mit dem Hinweis auf das vorweltliche Schöpfungswirken verwiesen wird) ruiniert ist, wurde—so die Selbstaussage—der, der immer war, geschaffen als ὁδῶν ἀρχή, d.h. als neuer und lebendiger Weg für die Menschen.[76] Die Verbindung von göttlicher und menschlicher Natur im Inkarnierten entspricht somit der Verbindung von Schöpfungswirken Christi und der Erlösungstat, die darin besteht, dass Christus als der neue Mensch selbst die Neuwerdung der Menschen einleitet.

Den christologischen Bezug sieht Gregor anschließend in Röm 13,14 und Eph 4,24 bestätigt. Daraus leitet Gregor ab, dass Christus der von Gott geschaffene καινὸς ἄνθρωπος ist, den die Menschen anziehen,[77] wobei die Aussage, dass er von Gott geschaffen ist, darauf verweist, dass er nicht auf gewöhnliche Weise als Mensch in Erscheinung getreten ist, sondern es eine eigene, von dem Sonstigen differierende Hervorgehensweise gegeben hat.[78] Die Verbindung von Christus und καινὸς ἄνθρωπος zeigt also genau diese Verbindung von göttlicher Natur (der Begriff θεία φύσις fällt hier explizit) und (erneuerter) menschlicher Seite.[79] Gregor fordert den Leser auf, abzuwägen, welche Deutung eher die θεοπρεπεῖς ἔννοιαι bewahrt, die des Eunomius, die besagt, dass der Schöpfer „gemacht" worden ist und daher der Schöpfung gleichwertig ist, oder die Gregors, die sich auf die οἰκονομία bezieht.[80] Letzteres sieht er auch durch Paulus gedeckt, der den καινὸς ἄνθρωπος als Geschöpf ansieht (also in dem Inkarnierten), in der wahren σοφία aber die Gewalt, die bei der Schöpfung gewirkt hat (ἡ ἐξουσία τῆς κτίσεως).[81] Schließlich passt hierzu auch die Reihenfolge (τάξις). Damit greift Gregor die bereits vorher genannte Reihenfolge κτίζεται—θεμελιοῦται—γεννᾶται (17,19f.) auf: Die Inkarnation und das Leiden entsprechen der

75 *CE* III 1,50f. (GNO II 21,8–19 Jaeger). Der Terminus ἀποκατάστασις bezieht sich hier nicht unmittelbar auf die Auferstehung, sondern auf den eschatologischen Heilszustand insgesamt, der als Wiederherstellung des Schöpfungszustandes begriffen wird.

76 *CE* III 1,51 (GNO II 21,19–24 Jaeger).

77 *CE* III 1,52 (GNO II 21,25–22.8 Jaeger).

78 *CE* III 1,52 (GNO II 22,8–12 Jaeger).

79 *CE* III 1,53 (GNO II 22,12–18 Jaeger).

80 *CE* III 1,54 (GNO II 22,19–26 Jaeger).

81 *CE* III 1,54 (GNO II 22,26–23.2 Jaeger).

Erschaffung des Anfangs der Wege,[82] dann wurde von den weisen ἀρχιτέκτονες (gemeint sind wohl die Apostel) das Fundament gelegt, das Christus selbst ist.[83] Dessen Funktion als Fundament bezieht sich auf die kommende Welt und das ewige Leben. Um daran teilzuhaben, braucht es die Mitteilung des göttlichen Willens und der vielfältigen Gnadengaben des Heiligen Geistes (wofür Gregor verschiedene metaphorische Bezeichnungen angibt: ὄρη καὶ βουνοί neben γῆ und ἄβυσσοι). Genau diese Mitteilung der θεῖα θελήματα und der χαρίσματα ist die Zeugung der σοφία, der in den Nicht-Glaubenden noch nicht gezeugt ist und in den Christen gezeugt worden ist.[84]

IVc: Seinen Deutungsansatz (die Verbindung von göttlicher und menschlicher Seite) bestätigt Gregor schließlich durch ein übertragenes Verständnis der Verse, die auf Prov 8,25 folgen. Mit dem Land aus Prov 8,26a ist das Land gemeint, das die Saat des λόγος aufnimmt, mit der unbewohnten Gegend dann das „Herz", das sich von den schlechten Bewohnern trennt. Das ist, übertragen verstanden, die „Wohnung an den Enden" (τὰ ἄκρα vgl. Prov 8,26a) der Erde.[85] Derjenige, in dem die Weisheit gezeugt ist, berührt die Erde nur so viel wie nötig und richtet sich ansonsten gedanklich nach oben aus (was das Bewohnen des Bereiches ὑπ' οὐρανόν entsprechend Prov 8,26b meint),[86] In der folgenden Auslegung deutet Gregor das Starkmachen der von oben stammenden Wolken (Prov 8,28) als Umsetzung der Weisungen (scil. Gottes), das Festmachen der Quellen unter dem Himmel (Prov 8,28b) als Verhindern des hervorsprudelnden ἐμπαθὲς ὕδωρ,[87] wobei die Festigkeit auf das διδασκαλίας χάρισμα zurückzuführen ist und vorausgesetzt wird, dass der entsprechend Begnadete schon über das irdische Leben hinausgehoben ist, hinauf in eine πνευματικὴ πολιτεία, womit die Winde (vgl. Prov 8,27b) gemeint seien.[88] Gregor nennt anschließend die Abgrenzung als Thron (Prov 8,27b) (was mit dem ἀφορίζεσθαι des Paulus verglichen wird)[89] und die Freude (vgl. Prov 8,31, wobei Gregor erneut die

82 *CE* III 1,55 (GNO II 23,3–10 Jaeger).

83 *CE* III 1,55 (GNO II 23,11–14 Jaeger).

84 *CE* III 1,56 (GNO II 23,14–27 Jaeger).

85 *CE* III 1,57 (GNO II 24,2–7 Jaeger).

86 *CE* III 1,58 (GNO II 24,7–17 Jaeger).

87 *CE* III 1,59 (GNO II 24,17–22 Jaeger). Die Deutung des Nebensatzes κἂν ἐν πηγαῖς κατάσχῃ ist unsicher, die Handschriften bieten καταχθῆ oder καταταχθῇ, vgl. F. Mann, „κατέχω", *Lexicon Gregorianum* 5 (2003), 289f.; Subjekt ist wohl das Wasser, das aus der Öffnung hervorsprudelt, auch wenn es in Quellen „herabgeführt" oder „unten angeordnet" ist. Die Konjektur zu einer Form von κατέχω ist hingegen schwerfällig und kaum eine Verbesserung.

88 *CE* III 1,59 (GNO II 24.22–25.2 Jaeger).

89 *CE* III 1,59 (GNO II 25,2–7 Jaeger).

Reihenfolge κτίζεται—θεμελιοῦται—γεννᾶται aufgreift), die er dann besonders in dem Makarismus aus Prov 8,32.34 gegeben sieht und als Freude Gottes über die Geretteten deutet.[90]

b *Die Christologie in* CE *III 1,91–93* (*incl.* CE *III 1,122–125*)

Der Rekurs des Eunomius auf den Sohnestitel, der zeigen soll, dass Christus genauso, wie er sich υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου nennt (scil. womit aber nicht gesagt ist, dass er einfach Mensch ist), auch υἱὸς θεοῦ ist (d.h. in einem besonderen, genauer zu erläuternden Sinne),[91] löst eine kurze christologische Erörterung aus. Für Gregor zeigt das Nebeneinander von Gottessohn und Menschensohn nämlich gerade die τῆς φύσεως κοινωνία, und zwar in beiden Richtungen: Genau so, wie er Menschensohn genannt wird wegen der συγγένεια des Fleisches, aus der er gezeugt wurde, wird er Gottessohn genannt wegen der συνάφεια mit der οὐσία, aus der er konstituiert wurde (ὑπέστη, hier parallel zu ἐγεννήθη; die Präposition zeigt dabei ein Verhältnis des [zeitlosen] Hervorbringens an)[92]. Die Begriffe συγγένεια und συνάφεια stehen hier parallel, wobei die συνάφεια durch das Genitivattribut τῆς οὐσίας präzisiert ist (gemeint ist also ein nicht nur vorübergehender oder willentlich hergestellter Zusammenhang), während in συγγένεια die natürliche „Verwandtschaft" bereits mit ausgedrückt ist (und durch den Relativsatz, der auf das Gezeugtwerden hinweist, auch verstärkt wird). Gregor sieht diesen naturhaften Zusammenhang mit der göttlichen wie der menschlichen Natur auch in dem Mittlertitel aus 1. Tim 2,5 ausgedrückt und bezieht ihn ausdrücklich auf beide Naturen (ἑκατέρᾳ φύσει), die menschliche und die göttliche. Der Sohnestitel ist beiden Naturen hinzugefügt, und zwar in gleichem Maße (κατὰ τὸ ἴσον).[93] Allerdings zeigt sich dann in den weiteren Sätzen, dass bei aller Parallelität doch Unterschiede bestehen: Derselbe ist (ἐστι) Gottessohn und wird (ἐγένετο) Menschensohn, nämlich als heilsgeschichtliche Maßnahme, um das, was naturhaft auseinanderliegt bzw. sich voneinander unterscheidet, zusammenzubringen.[94] Wenn man annehmen würde, dass Christus, obwohl er Menschensohn heißt, nicht an der menschlichen Natur teilhätte, dann könnte man auch behaupten, dass er, obwohl er Gottessohn heißt, nicht an der göttlichen Natur teilhat. Da Christus aber an der menschlichen Natur teilhat (was mit der Versuchung belegt wird), muss man annehmen, dass die Eigentümlichkeit (ἰδίωμα) der göttlichen Natur

90 *CE* III 1,60f. (GNO II 25,7–21 Jaeger).
91 *CE* III 1,91 (GNO II 35,1–5 Jaeger).
92 *CE* III 1,91f. (GNO II 35,5–12 Jaeger).
93 *CE* III 1,92 (GNO II 35,12–16 Jaeger).
94 *CE* III 1,92 (GNO II 35,16–19 Jaeger).

auch vollständig in ihm ist (weil das eben die Bezeichnung als Sohn in beiden Hinsichten ausdrückt).[95] Die Parallelität ist hier die entscheidende Denkfigur, wobei nicht näher thematisiert wird, dass für die menschliche Seite dann quasi en passant doch ein tiefgreifender Unterschied benannt wird, an dem sich die Menschen von dem Menschensohn unterscheiden: Bei dem Hinweis auf die Versuchung wird nämlich explizit gesagt, dass dies im Falle des Menschensohnes χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας geschehen sei. Es lässt sich überlegen, ob Gregor annimmt, dass dies als menschliches Verhalten möglich ist (also nicht erst durch die Verbindung mit der göttlichen Natur bzw. als Auswirkung dieser Vereinigung auf die menschliche Natur).

Der Abschnitt ist deswegen besonders interessant, weil er relativ deutlich eine Zweinaturenlehre an dem Nebeneinander von Menschensohn- und Gottessohntitel entfaltet (wie er etwa auch in der lateinischsprachigen Theologie gängig ist[96] und noch für den *Tomus Leonis* zentral sein wird) und außerdem die Parallele zwischen Teilhabe des Inkarnierten an göttlicher und menschlicher Natur soweit treibt, dass die volle Menschheit des Inkarnierten zum Beleg für die volle Gottheit Christi werden kann (vgl. den Konditionalsatz εἰ δὲ πᾶν . . ., ἀνάγκη πᾶσα . . . 35,22.24).

Mit dieser Argumentation lässt sich eine weitere Passage vergleichen, in der sich Gregor näherhin mit dem Sohnestitel befasst. Ausgelöst durch die Aussage des Eunomius, dass der Sohnestitel den Sohn als γέννημα erweise (dies aber als Hinweis auf die Verschiedenheit der οὐσία zu verstehen sei, da ja in der Bibel—so der fiktive Einwand aus 42,11–43,3—auch die Menschen Söhne der Finsternis, des Lichts etc. genannt werden), behauptet Gregor einen Unterschied zwischen den Menschen, die Söhne genannt werden, und Christus, der ebenfalls Sohn ist. Bei ersteren kann sich die Natur zum Schlechten wie zum Guten neigen, und entsprechend dieser πρόσκλισις (45,5) heißen die Menschen dann Söhne der Finsternis oder des Lichts. Christus hingegen kann nicht das Gegenteil aufnehmen (scil. das Böse), entsprechend kann bei ihm der Sohnestitel nicht auf den Effekt einer willentlichen Entscheidung (προαίρεσις) bezogen werden.[97]

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95 *CE* III 1,93 (GNO II 35,19–27 Jaeger). Dieser Gedanke unterscheidet sich markant von den Argumentationszusammenhängen, an denen Gregor aus der vollen Menschheit Jesu Überlegungen zur Universalität der Erlösung ableitet (auch wenn dies nicht als „physische Erlösungslehre" zu verstehen ist, cf. R.M. Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa. Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der ‚physischen' Erlösungslehre*, Philosophia Patrum 2, Leiden 1974, 138–140).

96 Vgl. T. Fuhrer – V. H. Drecoll, Art. „Filia—filius", *Augustinuslexikon* 3 (2004–2010), 11–17, 13f.

97 *CE* III 1, 121f. (GNO II 45,1–8 Jaeger).

Ein Mensch wird ein Kind des Lichts durch ein gutes Leben unter Ablegung der Werke der Finsternis (natürlich steht hier Röm 13,9–10 im Hintergrund). Dies gilt aber nicht entsprechend für den eingeborenen Sohn, der keineswegs erst ἐκ μεταβολῆς das Bessere annimmt.[98] Entsprechend stellt Gregor gegenüber: Ein Mensch kann Gottessohn werden durch die Geistzeugung in der Verbindung mit Christus (45,8–10), er kann sich selbst ändern und anstelle des alten den neuen Menschen anlegen (45,17f.). Gregor bezeichnet dies sogar als Anziehen der θεία φύσις (45,19–21). Der Mensch legt ab, was er hat, und nimmt stattdessen an, was er nicht hat (45,22f.). Insofern kann man beim Menschen mehrere Hinsichten unterscheiden, zum einen die Abstammung bzw. Sohnschaft im Bereich der Natur, zum anderen die Sohnschaft ἐκ καταχρήσεως, die aufgrund der Lebensentscheidung erlangt wird.[98a] Dem stellt Gregor Christus gegenüber: Der, der den Menschen zum Gottessohn macht, braucht selbst nicht einen anderen Sohn, dem er seine Sohnschaft verdankt, sondern wird das genannt, was er κατὰ φύσιν ist (nämlich Sohn).[98b] Er verhält sich immer gleich (und kann daher nichts ablegen oder annehmen) (45,18f.21f.), besonders nimmt er keine Schlechtigkeit auf (45,23f.) und ist ἓν ἀγαθόν und bleibt beständig in der ἁπλῆ τε καὶ ἀσύνθετος φύσις.[98c] Bei ihm wirkt sich eine willentliche Entscheidung nicht als Veränderung (μεταβάλλεσθαι) aus, sondern bei ihm sind Sein (εἶναι) und Wollen (βούλεσθαι) kongruent (46,2f.).[99] Entsprechend kann bei ihm der Sohnestitel nur bedeuten, dass er Sohn nicht erst aufgrund einer Entscheidung wird und der Sohnesbegriff bei ihm metaphorisch zu verstehen ist, sondern der Sohnestitel kann nur die κατὰ φύσιν οἰκειότης bedeuten.[100]

Gregor bezieht diese Argumentation nur auf die Gottessohnschaft Christi, die damit als eine unveränderliche und naturhafte erwiesen werden soll. Was dies für die menschliche Seite bedeutet, verfolgt er hier nicht, da die Argumentationsrichtung trinitätstheologisch ist (und sich nicht näher auf die Erläuterung der Inkarnation bezieht). So ließe sich ja überlegen, ob für die menschliche Natur nicht sehr wohl eine Veränderlichkeit angenommen werden müsste (so dass in dieser Hinsicht also der Sohnestitel für Christus tatsächlich eine Veränderung impliziert), und natürlich könnte man argumentieren, dass die Veränderlichkeit der menschlichen Natur sich auf Raum und Zeit, menschliche Entwicklung etc. bezieht, jedoch im Hinblick auf das Besser-Schlechter beim Inkarnierten unveränderlich ist (etwa aufgrund der Vereinigung mit

98 *CE* III 1,122 (GNO II 45,8–12 Jaeger).

98a *CE* III 1,124 (GNO II 45,24–27 Jaeger).

98b *CE* III 1,123 (GNO II 45,14–17 Jaeger).

98c *CE* III 1,125 (GNO II 45,27–46,1 Jaeger).

99 Vgl. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 121–123.

100 *CE* III 1,123–125 (GNO II 45,12–46,19 Jaeger).

der göttlichen Natur), doch wird eine solche (oder ähnliche) Argumentation hier nicht entwickelt. Insofern bleibt die Behauptung der vollständigen menschlichen Natur nur durch den kurzen Hinweis auf die Versuchung belegt bzw. wird eher vorausgesetzt, aber nicht selbst begründet.[101]

c *Die Unfassbarkeit der göttlichen οὐσία in* CE *III 1,103–110*

Der Zusammenhang zwischen οὐσία und γέννημα aus dem Eunomiuszitat wird von Gregor dahingehend aufgegriffen, dass dies gerade ein Hinweis auf die wesensmäßige Zusammengehörigkeit von Vater und Sohn, Erzeuger und Gezeugtem sei. Als Beispiel hatte Gregor dabei auch den Weinstock und den Wein genannt, die sich in der ὑγρότης nicht unterscheiden (37,21–24)—das Ge- bzw. Erzeugte ist jeweils mit dem Zeugenden bzw. Erzeugenden ὁμογενές (38,15f.).

Diese Argumentation ist der Hintergrund dafür, dass sich Gregor mit der Frage beschäftigt, ob man für die οὐσία Gottes eine begriffliche Beschreibung geben kann.[102] Die drei Begriffe ἑρμηνεία, ὑπογραφή und ἐξήγησις sind dabei insofern etwas überraschend, als sie eine Näherung und (besonders ὑπογραφή) sich tastend bewegende Umschreibung zu meinen scheinen. Gerade die Begriffe ἑρμηνεία und ἐξήγησις sind hier wohl doch eher so zu verstehen, dass es um eine Erklärung bzw. Darstellung geht, also eine Art begrifflicher Abbildung, die durch Verben wie διαλαμβάνω und περιλαμβάνω aufgenommen werden. Entsprechend ist ὑπογραφή hier weniger die Skizze, als (abgeleitet von

101 Im Hinblick auf die Eigenheit von Gregors Christologie stellt sich somit die Frage, ob die Schlussfolgerung von der vollen menschlichen Natur auf die volle göttliche Natur in gewisser Weise zu dem Eindruck quersteht, demzufolge in Gregors Theologie die „Menschheit droht zu verschwinden" (A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. Band 1. Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, Freiburg 1979, 541), vgl. zur „Asymmetrie" zwischen göttlicher und menschlicher Natur bzw. der Mitteilung ihrer Eigenschaften B. Gleede, „Der eine Christus vor, in und nach dem Fleisch—Einige Überlegungen zu Gregor von Nyssas Ad Theophilum adversus Apollinaristas", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism, Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008)*, SVigChr 106, Leiden – Boston 2011, 519-540, 536f.; vgl. H. Grelier, „Comment décrire l'humanité du Christ sans introduire une quaternité en Dieu? La controverse de Grégoire de Nysse contre Apolinaire de Laodicée", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus, (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008)*, SVigChr 106, Leiden – Boston 2011, 541–556, 556; M. Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa: Ancient and (Post)modern*, Oxford 2007, 105f. Zur Christologie in *CE* III 3 vgl. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 233–260 und den Beitrag unten im Band 293–312.

102 *CE* III 1,103 (GNO II 38,17–21 Jaeger).

ὑπογράφω) das Nachschreiben (nach Diktat), das Niederschreiben von etwas Gedachtem. Insofern geht es hier um eine begriffliche Beschreibung, die nicht einzelne Aspekte betrifft, sondern die οὐσία selbst. Abgelehnt wird somit für Gott sowohl eine begrifflich-präzise Festlegung (etwa der τῆς οὐσίας λόγος) als auch eine Art Definition.[103]

Festgehalten wird hingegen, dass τὸ ἀόριστον nicht durch irgendeine ἐπίνοια, ein „Hinzudenken", das mit Worten geschieht, erfasst werden kann, und zwar was die φύσις angeht. Gregor begründet die Transzendenz der göttlichen οὐσία an dieser Stelle nicht mit einem allgemeinen Prinzip der οὐσία (wie es etwa Basilius getan hatte durch Verweis auf die an sich unbekannte οὐσία der Erde),[104] sondern begründet sie mit dem Charakter des Göttlichen als unendlich.[105] Wesentlich ist dabei der Bezug auf den Bereich der οὐσία bzw. φύσις einerseits, auf die Unmöglichkeit einer begrifflichen Umschreibung andererseits.[106] Für ersteres gibt Gregor eine conclusio a minore ad maius: Wenn schon die Dinge um Gott (περὶ αὐτόν) grenzenlos sind (und dies belegt Gregor mit einer umformulierenden Aufnahme von Ps 144,3–5), dann gilt dies erst recht für den Bereich der οὐσία (worin auch immer sie besteht), und zwar gänzlich.[107] Für das letztere, den Bezug auf die begriffliche Beschreibung, rekurriert Gregor darauf, dass eine solche ἑρμηνεία durch die Bedeutung das ὑποκείμενον umfasst, das Unendliche jedoch nicht umfasst werden kann, so dass also eine begriffliche Beschreibung (ὀνομαστικὴ σημασία) nicht möglich ist. Entsprechend ist kein ὄνομα geeignet, das Unfassbare zu erfassen—also ist für das Göttliche ein schweigendes Verehren angemessen.[108]

In den Bereich der Polemik gehört die sich anschließende Erläuterung, dass Gregor bzw. „wir" gerne bereit seien, den Vorwurf zu ertragen, in dieser Hinsicht Unkenntnis (ἀμαθία 39,8.12) zu haben (vgl. ἀμαθεῖς 38,18). Wiederum (wie im Exkurs zu Prov 8,22) ist nicht ausdrücklich Eunomius, sondern eher eine Gruppe (im Gegensatz zur angemessenen ἀμαθία 39,12 sind dies die μαθηταὶ τῆς ἀπάτης 39,13) der Gegner, mit dem sich Gregor beschäftigt: Vorwurf ist Joh 4,22: Ihr verehrt, was ihr nicht kennt.[109] Dem stellt Gregor Paulus als διδάσκαλος

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103 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen Metaphysik*, FKDG 16, Göttingen 1966, 105.

104 Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* I 12 (SC 299, 214,35 Sesboüé).

105 Vgl. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit*, Göttingen 1966, 102f.

106 Vgl. T. Böhm, *Theoria—Unendlichkeit—Aufstieg. Philosophische Implikationen zu De vita Moysis von Gregor von Nyssa*, SVigChr 35, Leiden 1996, 136.

107 *CE* III 1,103f. (GNO II 38,21–26 Jaeger).

108 *CE* III 1,104f. (GNO II 38,26–39,6 Jaeger).

109 Wie bei Prov 8,22 ist der Zusammenhang mit Eunomius unklar. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 40f. verweist auf den besonderen Charakter der der Exegese einzelner Bibelverse gewid-

gegenüber (das Wortfeld des Lernens wird also fortgeführt), der sich im Hinblick auf die ὑπὲρ γνῶσιν μυστήρια (39, 18) als unwissend (ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ 39,17f.) erwies. Beleg dafür, dass auch Paulus der Meinung war, dass die φύσις Gottes keineswegs durch die menschliche περίνοια erfasst werden kann, sind Röm 11,33 und 1.Kor 2,9.[110] Dabei legt er besonders die Unerforschlichkeit der ὁδοί noch aus: Es handele sich um die τῆς γνώσεως ὁδοί, die zum ἀκατάληπτον führen und die für den Menschen nicht auffindbar sind. Die γνῶσις bleibt somit unzugänglich (ἀνεπίβατος), nicht einmal eine Spur oder ein Zeichen eines erfassenden Aufstiegs (ἔφοδος) ist gegeben. Wenn schon κρίματα, Erkenntniswege und Verkündigung der Güter (dies greift 1.Kor 2,9 auf) über der menschlichen εἰκασία liegen, dann gilt dies erst recht für das Göttliche selbst.[111] Entsprechend dreht Gregor jetzt den Vorwurf seiner Gegner um: Das Eingeständnis, für die Erkenntnis des Göttlichen zu gering zu sein, verbindet sich mit dem Verehren dessen, was man kennt (das Umdrehen des Arguments ist durch das ἀληθῶς 40,19 betont): Bekannt ist die Höhe der Herrlichkeit und die Tatsache, dass die Größe noch einmal alles Mutmaßen übersteigt.[112] Das Herrenwort lässt sich, so Gregor, viel eher auf die Gegner selbst beziehen. Bezieht es sich in Joh 4 auf die an einen Ort gebundene Verehrung (mit der Folge, dass das, was dort verehrt, nicht Gott ist, weil Gott eben nicht ortsgebunden ist, sondern πανταχοῦ und durch alles hindurchgehend), so vollziehen die Gegner (als χριστομάχοι bezeichnet 41,7) durch ihre Festlegung des göttlichen Wesens auf die ἀγεννησία auch eine Art von περιγραφή, so dass sie etwas anderes verehren als Gott.[113]

Die Passage ist deswegen besonders interessant, weil sie den Begriff des ἀόριστον (38,20.28; 39,9) anwendet. Der Bereich der οὐσία ist dabei völlig transzendent. Er liegt gleichsam noch oberhalb dessen, was über den Bereich περὶ αὐτόν (38,24) erkennbar ist: Hier ist die Herrlichkeit (δόξα) über alle Maßen groß, so dass man nur schweigend anbeten kann (προσκυνεῖν aus Joh 4,22 in 40,19 neben τιμᾶν 39,5 und λατρεία 41,11). Diese Herrlichkeit ist begrifflich ebensowenig erfassbar wie die Handlungen Gottes (κρίματα und Tun des Guten stehen nebeneinander). Die Transzendenz der göttlichen οὐσία wird also durch den Hinweis auf das ἀόριστον in zweifacher Weise abgesichert: a) durch die Unterscheidung zwischen dem Göttlichen selbst und dem Bereich der Peripherie (Herrlichkeit, Handlungen), b) durch die Behauptung, dass nicht

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menten Abschnitte, geht aber auf den Abschnitt *CE* III 1,103–110 (GNO 38,17–41,18 Jaeger) nicht näher ein.

110 *CE* III 1,105f. (GNO II 39,6–25 Jaeger).

111 *CE* III 1,107 (GNO II 39,25–40,8 Jaeger).

112 *CE* III 1,108f. (GNO II 40,9–25 Jaeger).

113 *CE* III 1,109f. (GNO II 40.25–41.18 Jaeger); vgl. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit*, 104.

einmal dieser Bereich der Peripherie, also erst recht nicht das göttliche Wesen selbst begrifflich-sprachlich erfasst werden kann.

d *Die Bedeutung der biblischen Christusbezeichnungen in* CE *III,1,131–138*

Im Zusammenhang eines prosopoietisch eingebrachten Einwandes war bestritten worden, dass der biblisch belegte Sohnestitel tatsächlich die Zusammengehörigkeit in der φύσις bedeute (42.11–43,3). Darauf hatte Gregor zunächst mit einer Unterscheidung von natürlicher und erworbener Sohnschaft geantwortet und schließlich den Vorwurf zurückgegeben, indem er Eunomius vorwarf, den Sohnestitel nicht angemessen zu verstehen. Als Beleg hierfür bringt Gregor ein erstaunlich langes Zitat aus der *Apologia Apologiae*, in dem Eunomius eine umfangreiche Liste von biblischen Christusbezeichnungen anführt.[114] Für Eunomius ist klar, dass man diese Bezeichnungen nicht einfach auf den Bereich des Unkörperlichen und Unstofflichen, Schlechthinnigen und Formlosen beziehen darf, sondern jeweils die Namen ἐπὶ τὸ θεοπρεπέστερον (47,4) beziehen, ja übertragen (μετενέγκοντες 47,5) muss: Keiner dieser Begriffe sei also Angabe der φύσις (umfasse nicht die ἔνδειξις der Natur 47,11),[115] und entsprechend dürfe man auch die Bezeichnung Sohn nicht κατὰ τὴν ἐπικρατοῦσαν συνήθειαν (47,13) verstehen, sondern muss eine andere Bedeutung herausfinden. Immerhin verlangt Eunomius damit etwas, was durchaus mit Gregors Deutung von Prov 8,22 vergleichbar ist, dass man nämlich nicht einfach den vordergründigen Sinn benutzen kann (sogar das Stichwort πρόχειρος fällt 47,16, vgl. 17,9.22). Allerdings trifft dies Gregor zufolge nun gerade für den Sohnestitel nicht zu.

Um das zu belegen, entfaltet Gregor eine Unterscheidung der Christusbezeichnungen in zwei Bereiche, die in gewisser Weise mit den Aussagen über Christus im Hinblick auf sich selbst und den Aussagen über sein Handeln im Hinblick auf die οἰκονομία im Zusammenhang des Prov 8–Exkursus vergleichbar ist.

Die Bezeichnungen von Christus als Stein, Auferstehung, Hirt oder Licht sind mit der als Sohn nicht direkt vergleichbar, vielmehr braucht man eine τέχνη und eine Auslegungsregel (κανών): Die einen Namen zeigen die besonders hochstehende δόξα, die anderen die προνοητικὴ οἰκονομία und drücken das

114 *CE* III 1,127–129 (GNO II 46,21–47,16 Jaeger).

115 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium", in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du Colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 Septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 230–244, ebd. 241f. zum Verhältnis zur entsprechenden Lehre von den Namen bei Basilius.

θεοπρεπές aus.[116] Letztere sind auch abgesehen von dem, was heilsgeschichtlich geschieht, passend. Für erstere gibt Gregor die Beispiele Weinstock (48,11–13), Hirte (48,13f.) und Arzt (48,14):[117] sie würden nicht ausgesagt, wenn es nicht die jeweilige Tätigkeit gäbe. Von diesen „ökonomischen" Bezeichnungen sind diejenigen abzugrenzen, die ἐν συζυγίᾳ τινὶ σχετικῇ ausgesagt werden, also solchen Bezeichnungen, die den Zusammenhang zwischen Sohn und Vater ausdrükken. Gregor nennt die Bezeichnungen υἱός, δεξιά, μονογενής, λόγος, σοφία und δύναμις (alle sechs Begriffe werden aufgegriffen und als biblische Wendungen belegt).[118] Diese Unterscheidung von Aussagen, die „ökonomisch" sind,[119] und solchen, die die Relation zum Vater angeben, ist nicht mit der Unterscheidung von οἰκονομία und θεολογία identisch (wie sie etwa bei Basilius begegnet[120] und [davon abhängig] auch im Eunomiuszitat 114,13). Denn interessanterweise fehlt hier der Begriff θεολογία, obwohl Gregor durchaus τὸ θεῖον, die göttliche φύσις u.ä. der οἰκονομία gegenüberstellen kann,[121]Allerdings kann Gregor an anderen Stellen gerade auch die Zugehörigkeit Christi zum Vater als θεολογία bezeichnen,[122] so dass die Differenz zu der συζυγία σχετική wiederum auch nicht überbewertet werden sollte.

Interessant (und typisch für Gregor) ist, dass beide Gruppen an Namen (die auf die Ökonomie bezogenen Namen und die, die die Relation zum Vater ausdrücken) in einer gewissen Weise strukturgleich zu deuten sind: genauso wie man bei den „ökonomischen" Namen die vordergründige Bedeutung (πρόχειρος ἔννοια) abtun muss und das Verständnis ἐπὶ τὸ θεοπρεπές (damit greift Gregor eine Wendung aus dem Eunomiuszitat auf: 47,4) hinüberführen muss, genauso ist es bei der Bezeichnung Sohn. Genauso wie man natürlich nicht das materielle Licht, den begangenen Weg, den seelenlosen Stein, das aus dem Ackerbau stammende Brot und die aus Worten gebildete Rede (λόγος) für Christus ansetzen darf, genauso wenig darf man beim Sohn die normale und auf die φύσις bezogene Bedeutung annehmen, durch die ausgedrückt wäre, dass der Erzeugte

116 *CE* III 1,131f. (GNO II 47,26–48,7 Jaeger). Vgl. M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse*, 77.

117 *CE* III 1,132f. (GNO II 48,7–17 Jaeger).

118 *CE* III 1,133f. (GNO II 48,19–24 Jaeger).

119 Vgl. zu οἰκονομία bei Gregor J.-R. Bouchet, „Remarques sur le sens du mot οἰκονομία dans la langue de Grégoire de Nysse", in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du Colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 Septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 194–196.

120 Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 3 (SC 305, 16,10–13 Sesboüé), vgl. M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theory and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, SVigChr 103, Leiden 2010, 248–253.

121 Belege bei F. Mann, „οἰκονομία", *Lexicon Gregorianum* 6 (2007), 698–704, 701 (2. Spalte).

122 Vgl. F. Mann, „θεολογία", *Lexicon Gregorianum* 4 (2002), 225.

ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας des Erzeugers ist, sondern muss eben eine θεοπρεπεστέρα ἑρμηνεία finden.[123] Dabei ist mit den Adverbialausdrücken κατὰ φύσιν (49,5) und dem ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας (49,6) wohl die stofflich-materielle Seite angesprochen (nicht ein Zusammenhang im Bereich der Natur bzw. ein ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας-Sein insgesamt). Die Wortwahl ist an dieser Stelle merkwürdig ungenau und unvorsichtig (es wäre ja kein Problem gewesen, zu sagen κατὰ τὴν σωματικὴν φύσιν und τὸ ἐκ τῆς ὕλης bzw. οὐσίας ὑλικῆς), doch zeigt nicht nur das Adjektiv συνηθής (49,5), dass es sich hier um die gewöhnliche, materiell gebundene Zeugungsrelation beim Menschen handelt, sondern auch der weitere Kontext (bes. 49,27–30). Gregor stellt nämlich die Frage, wie man diese Bezeichnung als (scil. gezeugter) Sohn „gottangemessener" verstehen kann.[124] Dass das höherwertigere Verständnis dabei jedenfalls besser als das minderwertigere ist, setzt Gregor voraus. Wenn die Gegner nun das Verständnis ablehnen, dass der Sohn ἐκ τῆς φύσεως des Vaters ist (eine Formulierung, die unvorsichtig nahe an 49,5f. steht), ist offen, welcher höhere Zusammenhang stattdessen benannt werden könnte. Die Suche nach einem solchen, noch höherwertigeren Verständnis kann hier nur ohne Ergebnis bleiben, denn die göttliche Natur liegt ja oberhalb jeder Höhe, sie ist das Höchste, wozu man greifen kann.[125] Wenn nun feststeht, dass man jede christologische Bezeichnung gedanklich nicht im normalen Verständnis, sondern πρὸς τὸ μεγαλειότερον übertragen muss (wie es Eunomius ja selbst verlangt hatte), aber nichts anderes als μεγαλοφυεστέρα ἔννοια angenommen werden kann als die Zusammengehörigkeit des Gezeugten mit dem Erzeuger (Gregor wählt hier das auffallend un-ontologische Wort τὸ γνήσιον [50,1], vermutlich, um ein stoffliches Missverständnis einer Wendung wie ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας zu vermeiden), dann ist das letztere Verständnis des Sohnestitels (scil. als Angabe der naturhaften Relation zum Vater) das höchstwertigste und daher „Gott-angemessenste" Verständnis.[126]

So ansprechend der Gedanke zunächst scheint, dass die unüberbietbare „Höhe" des Naturbegriffs belegt, dass der Sohnestitel nun eben gerade auf die Natur bezogen werden muss, so unvollständig ist bei genauerem Hinsehen doch an dieser Stelle die Argumentation. Denn Gregor zeigt ja gerade nicht, dass nur die Bezeichnungen der συζυγία σχετική auf die φύσις bezogen werden können. Mit dem Hinweis darauf, dass für jede Bezeichnung die höchstmögliche Interpretation gefunden werden müsse, könnte man natürlich gerade auch

123 *CE* III 1,135 (GNO II,48,29–49,8 Jaeger).

124 *CE* III 1,136 (GNO II, 49,12–14 Jaeger).

125 *CE* III 1,136f. (GNO II, 49,15–27 Jaeger).

126 *CE* III 1,138 (GNO II 49,27–50,5 Jaeger); vgl. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 191.

die „ökonomischen“ Bezeichnungen samt und sonders auf die Natur beziehen. Dann aber würde sich die von Gregor geltend gemachte Unterscheidung der Bezeichnungen auflösen. Diese Anfrage lässt sich aufgrund der in *Contra Eunomium* III,1 gemachten Argumentation nicht lösen—aber es handelt sich ja auch nur um das erste von 10 Büchern, das Gregor auch eher mit dem Hinweis auf die Länge abbricht als mit dem Hinweis darauf, alles Wesentliche gesagt zu haben.[127]

127 *CE* III 1,141 (GNO II 11–13 Jaeger).

Confusion eunomienne et clarté nysséenne : *Contre Eunome* III 2

Matthieu Cassin

Comme les études consacrées dans ce même volume aux autres tomes du *Contre Eunome* III le montrent largement, il est souvent difficile de déterminer avec précision un contenu propre pour chacun et la manière dont il s'articule avec les autres. Le tome 2 ne fait pas exception, même si l'on peut découvrir une certaine unité autour de la discussion des appellations du Fils employées par Eunome, et en particulier du terme de γέννημα. Toutefois, la nature du texte nysséen invite à ne pas se contenter d'une lecture thématique. En effet, le *Contre Eunome* constitue une réfutation suivie du texte d'Eunome, présentée à la manière d'un commentaire biblique, lemme et développement du commentateur, ou ici du réfutateur. Il convient donc de prendre d'abord en compte les modalités de composition du texte nysséen et son rapport avec celui de son adversaire, avant d'entrer dans une étude plus détaillée des modalités de la réfutation et de l'apport nysséen dans ce tome. L'étude se concentrera sur la controverse, ses instruments et son contenu.

I D'un texte à l'autre : Basile, Eunome et Grégoire

S'il est toujours possible d'entrer directement dans le corps du texte nysséen et de se laisser porter par ses dynamiques principales, le lecteur moderne tend à chercher d'abord des points de repère et une structure, afin de s'orienter d'emblée dans la matière qui lui est offerte. La première approche ici proposée concerne donc la structure de *Contre Eunome* III.2.

1 *Indices nysséens et eunomiens*

La première difficulté concerne les bornes même de l'ensemble, c'est-à-dire la définition des tomes à l'intérieur du livre III[1], et en particulier du deuxième. Au premier abord, l'auteur semble indiquer une rupture thématique nette à la fin du tome 1, qui justifierait la césure introduite entre les deux tomes :

1 Pour une présentation générale de la question, voir dans ce volume p. 12-15.

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> Mais en voilà assez sur ce sujet. Car, quoique un flot d'arguments se présente encore à nous, de façon à ce que leur grand nombre ne dégénère pas en démesure, nous nous satisferons de cela pour ce que nous nous étions proposé[2].

Cependant, de telles formules se retrouvent ailleurs dans le texte nysséen, en des points qui ne constituent pas aussi nettement des articulations majeures de l'œuvre[3], même si une formulation semblable est également employée à la fin du tome 2[4]. Il semblerait plutôt que des formules de ce genre indiquent bien le passage d'un sujet à un autre, et à ce titre, le changement de tome n'est pas mal placé, comme on peut par exemple le penser pour la césure tome 4-5, voire 3-4-5[5], mais il n'indique pas nécessairement un changement essentiel dans le sujet ou la démarche argumentative. On note en effet une remarquable continuité thématique du deuxième tome avec la seconde partie du premier (*CE* III 1,66-141), autour de la question de l'engendrement du Fils, et plus précisément de la distinction – ou au contraire de la confusion – entre génération sans passion du Fils et engendrement des créatures. De ce fait, on peut considérer que les tomes 1-2 forment une relative unité, ou plutôt que *CE* III 1 66-2 165 constitue un ensemble thématique.

On dispose toutefois d'une autre voie d'accès au caractère unitaire – ou non – de ce tome, qui nous est fournie par les fragments d'Eunome : en effet, sans même envisager dans un premier temps une reconstitution de l'œuvre eunomienne, les extraits cités offrent des références relativement explicites au *Contre Eunome* de Basile. Si l'on part du présupposé que, sauf mention contraire explicite, Grégoire suit l'ordre du texte eunomien[6], la succession des fragments d'Eunome dans la réponse nysséenne nous permet donc de reconstituer l'ordre dans lequel il répondait à Basile. Or le constat est ici plutôt surprenant : il

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2 *CE* III 1,141 (GNO II 51,10-13) : ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τούτων τοσαῦτα. πολλῶν γὰρ ἡμῖν λόγων ἐπιρρεόντων, ὡς ἂν μὴ τὸ πλῆθος εἰς ἀμετρίαν ἐκπέσοι, τούτοις περὶ τῶν προτεθέντων ἀρκεσθησόμεθα.

3 Voir par exemple *CE* I 230 ; 535 ; III 2,81 ; 4,64 ; 6,55 ; 8,23. On trouve également quelques exemples de cette formule (ταῦτα εἰς τοσοῦτον) dans le *Contre Eunome* de Basile : I 2,81 ; 5,12.75 ; voir aussi I 21,41. Le traducteur français indique d'ailleurs, à la première occurrence, la fonction de cette formule chez Basile, laquelle marque fréquemment une transition (SC 299, 156 n. 1).

4 *CE* III 2,165 (GNO II 106,21-22) : ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν εἰς τοσοῦτον.

5 Sur ce point, voir la référence citée *supra* n. 1.

6 Sur ce point, voir p. 15-16 et M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse. Polémique littéraire et exégèse dans le Contre Eunome*, Études augustiniennes, série Antiquité 193, Paris 2012, 26-28.

semble bien que, tout particulièrement pour cette section correspondant au tome 2, Eunome ne suivait pas l'ordonnancement du texte basilien.

Le dernier fragment cité dans le tome 1 (*CE* III 1,127-129) pourrait en effet correspondre à Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 2,23-40, pour la discussion des noms de l'économie dans le cas du Verbe ; plus largement, les trois fragments cités par Grégoire dans le tome 1 se rapportent à Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 1-2, c'est-à-dire au débat sur les noms du Fils, leurs appuis scripturaires et leur interprétation. En revanche, le premier extrait de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* cité au tome 2 (*CE* III 2,1) semble répondre à un passage de Basile plus lointain (Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 6,4-17) sur la conception de l'engendrement corporel.[7] Cette hypothèse est confirmée par des liens plus étroits encore entre le fragment cité en *CE* III 2,28 et la fin de la section basilienne précédente (Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 6,9-12). Il est possible que les différents fragments cités ensuite par Grégoire (*CE* III 2,73.104.117.125) se rapportent à la suite du développement basilien et en particulier à la discussion sur l'attribution du nom de « rejeton » (γέννημα) au Fils (Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 6,30-7,22) ; les liens, cependant, ne sont pas très étroits. On pourrait encore faire l'hypothèse que le fragment cité en *CE* III 2 137, dernier extrait présent dans le tome 2, se rapporte à la discussion par Basile du lien entre nom et substance et de l'écart entre le nom de créature et celui de rejeton (Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 4-5) ; cependant, cette même section basilienne semble recevoir une réponse plus directe dans les fragments cités en *CE* III 5. On a d'ailleurs un indice assez sûr de cette relation dans la citation par Grégoire d'un passage du traité de son frère aîné pris à ces chapitres, en réponse à Eunome[8].

Au terme de ce bref parcours, les liens qui relient au *Contre Eunome* de Basile les fragments d'Eunome, cités par Grégoire en *CE* III 2, semblent donc ténus ; il se pourrait donc bien que, comme pour la matière du tome 1, ce deuxième tome corresponde encore à une section introductive de l'ouvrage eunomien ;

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7 Le rapprochement avec le texte de Basile est également appuyé par un terme de la réponse nysséenne : en *CE* III 2,8 (GNO II 54,14), Grégoire ajoute à la liste des termes employés par Eunome un mot, ῥεῦσις, qu'il peut emprunter au fragment suivant de son adversaire (*CE* III 2,28 [GNO II 61,10]) mais qui trouve aussi son unique occurrence dans le *Contre Eunome* de Basile, sous une forme légèrement variante, ῥύσις, dans le passage cité (Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 6,10).

8 En *CE* III 5,21-22, Grégoire cite Basile, *Contre Eunome*, II 4,1-13, dans le cadre de sa réponse au fragment d'Eunome cité en *CE* III 5,18. Cette citation de Basile par Grégoire pose d'ailleurs d'importants problèmes d'interprétation, du fait de divergences entre le texte des manuscrits nysséens et le texte des principaux témoins de l'œuvre basilienne : voir en particulier J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa, Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, SVigChr 46, Leiden, Boston, Köln 2000, 101-104.

au contraire, le débat suivi avec le texte basilien commence clairement avec le long extrait cité au début du tome 3 (*CE* III 3,15-25) et se laisse ensuite bien plus facilement et continûment suivre. On fera donc l'hypothèse que les éléments discutés dans ce deuxième tome se situent encore dans un contexte introductif et programmatique, et peuvent de ce fait se rapporter à tous les points de la controverse antérieure. Aussi les indices fournis par le texte d'Eunome sont-ils de peu d'utilité pour reconstituer les structures qui sous-tendent la pensée de l'évêque de Nysse dans ce deuxième tome.

2 *Lectures modernes*

Si les principaux éléments saillants du tome 2 ne permettent pas de déterminer la structure et la progression du texte nysséen, peut-on s'appuyer sur des indices textuels différents, afin de dégager le mouvement de cette section du traité ? Il semble dans un premier temps assez aisé de dégager des micro-structures qui scandent le texte par champ thématique : c'est la démarche adoptée par deux des traducteurs du *Contre Eunome* III, Cl. Moreschini et S. G. Hall[9]. Dans le détail, leurs découpages du texte ne concordent pas forcément ; cependant, ils s'accordent à ne proposer comme guide au lecteur que des petits en-têtes, tous placés au même niveau hiérarchique. C'est là une position prudente, qui évite d'avoir à se prononcer sur la démarche nysséenne d'ensemble. Une attitude similaire caractérise le découpage du texte en *kephalaia* qui est transmis par les manuscrits : le créateur de ces subdivisions, dont on peut situer l'activité entre le 6e et le 9e siècle, a extrait une ou plusieurs thématique pour chacune des sections de l'œuvre qu'il a distinguées, sans dégager de lien entre elles ou de progression de l'une à l'autre[10]. Ce sont ces mêmes en-têtes qui ont été retenus pour la traduction anglaise publiée au 19e s. dans la collection des *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* ; toutefois, faute d'un recours direct aux manuscrits, les traducteurs les ont insérés à la place qui leur semblait le mieux convenir.

La seule tentative publiée de dégager une structure hiérarchisée et progressive du texte nysséen est celle de B. Pottier[11] ; j'ai moi-même élaboré

9 C. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa, Teologia trinitaria : Contro Eunomio, Confutazione della professione di fede di Eunomio*, Milano 1994 ; pour la traduction anglaise de S. G. Hall, voir ici même, 42-233.

10 Pour une présentation du dossier des *kephalaia* dans le *Contre Eunome*, voir *supra*, 13-14, ainsi que le tableau qui indique la position des chapitres, 29-31.

11 B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du « Contre Eunome » avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Namur 1994, 413-447, et en particulier 433-435 pour *CE* III 2. Son travail s'appuie largement sur B. C. Barmann, *The Cappadocian Triumph over Arianism*, Stanford University, Stanford 1966, 1971.

une proposition proche de la sienne en réalisant la traduction française de ce texte, mais qui en diffère sur plusieurs points et qui est encore précisée ici[12]. La difficulté est grande en effet : pour un lecteur moderne, un plan structuré est un guide nécessaire pour l'intelligence du texte, afin de pouvoir situer chaque argument au sein d'un ensemble plus vaste où il s'inscrit. Cependant, une telle organisation n'est pas nécessairement celle d'un écrit antique : le texte nysséen se plie difficilement à une telle lecture et bien des aspects n'entrent pas dans un cadre de ce genre, qui peut même sembler artificiel. On proposera toutefois un tel guide, afin d'aider le lecteur. Deux niveaux d'organisation s'entremêlent sans cesse : les modalités de la réfutation, d'une part, et le contenu thématique, d'autre part. Dans la mesure où il s'agit d'une réfutation, en effet, le texte de Grégoire se construit dans une relation dialectique au texte d'Eunome qu'il réfute : c'est l'*Apologie de l'apologie* qui forme en effet l'un des fils de la trame nysséenne, mais ce fil est lui-même tissé avec un autre, proprement nysséen, celui-là, et qui correspond au mouvement même de la pensée de Grégoire. C'est que la réfutation n'est pas dans un rapport neutre au texte adverse, puisque le processus même de sélection d'extraits constitue une première intervention de l'évêque de Nysse, qui est redoublée par l'interprétation qu'il leur impose. On verra en effet que le réfutateur ne comprend visiblement pas toujours le texte et les termes d'Eunome dans le même sens que leur auteur, qu'il s'agisse ou non d'une déformation volontaire. En tout cas, la succession des extraits d'Eunome fournit des indices essentiels pour comprendre la démarche de son réfutateur, et ils figurent donc en bonne place dans la tentative de plan qui suit[13]. On indique également les *kephalaia* de la tradition manuscrite et leur position, entre crochets droits puisqu'ils ne sont pas nysséens. Les numéros des paragraphes sont donnés entre parenthèses.

Second tome du troisième discours de Grégoire, évêque de Nysse, contre Eunome

I. Exposé préliminaire : Eunome confond génération du Fils et génération des créatures

1. **Fragment 1** et explicitation (1-7)

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12 Traduction (M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique à la fin du IV^e^ siècle : Grégoire de Nysse,* Contre Eunome *III*, Thèse de doctorat, Université Paris IV Sorbonne, Paris 2009, t. 2) à paraître dans la collection *Sources chrétiennes*, avec une nouvelle édition du texte grec et des fragments syriaques.

13 Faute d'une édition critique des fragments de l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, on a utilisé une numérotation *ad hoc* limitée à ce seul tome 2. Je prépare actuellement une telle édition, en collaboration avec M. DelCogliano et A. Radde-Gallwitz.

[1. « Ce quatrième discours explique clairement le discours sur la nature du rejeton, celui sur l'engendrement sans passion du Monogène et "*Dans le principe était le Verbe*"[14], ainsi que l'engendrement issu de la Vierge[15]. » (1)]

2. Première réponse : Eunome confond propriétés divines et propriétés des créatures
   a. L'exemple de Nicodème (8-11)
   b. Eunome se contredit quant à l'emploi du terme 'rejeton' (11-15)
3. L'exposé de Jean et celui d'Eunome
   a. Structure pédagogique du prologue johannique (16-23)
   b. Position de Jn et position d'Eunome (24-27)

[2. « Ensuite, en convaincant Eunome d'avoir affirmé ce qui s'adapte à l'existence terrestre à propos du Monogène, il démontre que < l'adversaire > veut ainsi montrer qu'il est soumis au changement et créé[16]. » (27 *in fine*)]

II. Réfutation de l'identification du Fils aux créatures

1. **Fragment 2** et application de l'énoncé aux créatures (28-33)
2. Conséquences absurdes de l'identification de la nature du Fils à celle des créatures
   a. Exposé général (34-38)
   b. Cas particulier : le Fils et les anges (He 1) (39-42)
3. Examen des occurrences pauliniennes du terme 'premier-né'

[3. « Ensuite, il parcourt de manière admirable le discours sur 'Premier-né', dans la mesure où il est mentionné quatre fois par l'apôtre[17]. » (43)]

   a. Objection prêtée à l'adversaire (43-44)
   b. Liste des lieux pauliniens (45-46)
   c. He 1, 6 : « Premier-né » (47-49)
   d. Col 1, 18 ; Rm 8, 29 ; Col 1, 15 (50-57)

4. Génération et passion

[4. « Après cela, de nouveau l'impassibilité de l'engendrement du Seigneur et l'inintelligence d'Eunome, parce qu'il dit que la substance engendrée possède

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14 *Jn* 1, 1.

15 α'. Ὁ τέταρτος οὗτος λόγος τὴν περὶ τοῦ γεννήματος φυσιολογίαν καὶ τὴν περὶ τῆς ἀπαθοῦς γεννήσεως τοῦ μονογενοῦς καὶ τὸ Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος ἔτι τε τὴν ἐκ παρθένου γέννησιν σαφῶς διερμηνεύει. (GNO I 10,8-11).

16 β'. Εἶθ' οὕτως τὰ ἁρμόζοντα περὶ τῆς ὑποστάσεως τῆς γη<ίνη>ς ταῦτα περὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς τὸν Εὐνόμιον εἰρηκέναι διελέγξας τρεπτὸν αὐτὸν καὶ κτιστὸν βουλόμενον δεῖξαι ἀποδείκνυσιν. (GNO I 10,12-15).

17 γ'. Εἶτα τὸν περὶ τοῦ πρωτοτόκου λόγον πάλιν ὡς παρὰ τοῦ ἀποστόλου τετράκις μνημονευθέντα θαυμασίως διέξεισιν. (GNO I 10,16-18).

l'appellation de Fils, et à rebours l'oublie et nie la relation du Fils au Père ; où il traite également de la drogue de Circé et de celle de la mandragore[18] » (58)]

a. Toute génération n'implique pas une passion (58-61)
b. Génération sans passion et création sans passion (62-65)
c. Production, génération, passion (66-71)

III. Eunome confond les termes pour mieux masquer son propos

1. Présentation de deux éléments d'un fragment
   a. **Fragment 3a** (73) et situation polémique (72-74)
   b. Eunome et les siens : Ulysse et ses compagnons chez Circé (75-81)
2. Contradiction sur « substance la plus propre » (82-88)

[5. « Et de nouveau, il montre qu'Eunome, contraint par la vérité, se fait l'avocat de la doctrine droite, dans la mesure où il reconnaît comme la plus propre et la première non seulement la substance du Père, mais aussi celle du Fils[19]. » (82)]

3. Eunome s'oppose à la foi de l'Église sans argumenter (89-99)
4. Rejeton, chose créée et produit

[6. « Ensuite, il explore le discours sur 'rejeton', 'produit' et 'créature' et démontre que l'absence d'intermédiaire et de division de la substance ainsi que la relation à celui qui l'a créé et produit sont dites de manière impie par Eunome et Théognoste[20]. » (100)]

   a. Rejeton et chose créée sont contradictoires (100-102)
   b. Argumentation à partir des relatifs (103-108)

   Fragment 3b (104)

   c. Conclusion (109-110)
5. Récapitulation : confusion volontaire d'Eunome (111-116)
6. Examen de la suite du fragment 3b : présence ou absence d'intermédiaire (117-120)
7. Eunome et Théognoste (121-122)
8. Il n'y a pas de comparaison non plus entre les créatures (123-124)

   Fragment 3c (123)

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18 δ'. Μετὰ τοῦτο πάλιν τὸ ἀπαθὲς τῆς τοῦ κυρίου γεννήσεως καὶ τὸ τοῦ Εὐνομίου ἀνόητον ὡς τὴν γεννηθεῖσαν οὐσίαν τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ προσηγορίαν ἔχειν εἰπόντος, πάλιν δὲ ἐπιλαθομένου καὶ τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα σχέσιν ἀρνουμένου· ἐν οἷς καὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν Κίρκην καὶ τὸ <τοῦ> μανδραγόρου διέξεισι φάρμακον. (GNO I 10,19-24).

19 ε'. Πάλιν τε τὸν Εὐνόμιον ὑπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀναγκαζόμενον τῷ ὀρθῷ συνηγοροῦντα δείκνυσι δόγματι, κυριωτάτην καὶ πρώτην οὐ μόνον τὴν τοῦ πατρός, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν τοῦ μονογενοῦς οὐσίαν ὁμολογοῦντα. (GNO I 10,25-11,2).

20 ς'. Εἶτα τὸν περὶ τοῦ γεννήματος καὶ ποιήματος καὶ κτίσματος γυμνάζει λόγον καὶ τὸ ἀμεσίτευτον καὶ ἀμέριστον τῆς οὐσίας καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα καὶ πεποιηκότα σχέσιν ἀσεβῶς παρά τε Εὐνομίου καὶ Θεογνώστου λεγόμενα ἀποδείκνυσι. (GNO I 11,3-7).

[7. « En outre, il réfute avec sagesse et avec art l'absence de comparaison possible avec ceux qui sont advenus après le Fils et l'idolâtrie malhonnêtement conçue par Eunome et cachée pour tromper les auditeurs, au moyen des noms de Monogène et de Fils[21]. » (123)]

IV. Eunome cache sous l'appellation de « Monogène » la création

1. Fragment d'Eunome et brève présentation (125-128)

Fragment 3d (125)

2. Eunome trompe ses auditeurs par de vains mots (129-135)

V. Faut-il lier les appellations aux substances ?

1. Les sens du mot « différence » (136-140)

Fragment 4 (137)

[8. « Ensuite, il montre ainsi que la substance du Père et du Fils est sans différence ; où il enseigne aussi de nombreuses différences et harmonies, en rendant clairs la forme, le sceau et l'empreinte[22]. » (137)]

2. Application au Fils et au Père (141-150)
3. Substance et génération (151-155)

[9. Ensuite, en rendant clairs substance et engendrement, il condamne le langage creux et le bavardage d'Eunome en le comparant à des claquettes[23]. (151)]

VI. Conclusion

1. Pourquoi Eunome ne dit-il pas clairement son blasphème ? (156-160)
2. Qui, d'Eunome ou de Basile, déshonore le Fils ? (161-165)

[10. « Ensuite, il termine son discours en montrant avec sagesse que les paroles du grand Basile sur l'engendrement du Monogène ont été méchamment calomniées par Eunome[24]. » (161)]

Cette proposition de structure permet de saisir le mouvement d'ensemble du texte nysséen, et en particulier les retours nombreux de Grégoire sur la même question de l'écart entre le Verbe et les créatures ; le centre du débat concerne clairement la nature et la qualification de l'engendrement du Verbe, par rapport à l'engendrement des créatures et à leur création. Cependant, une

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21 ζ'. Πρὸς τούτοις τὸ ἀσύγκριτον τῶν μετὰ τὸν υἱὸν γενομένων, καὶ τὴν κακούργως παρὰ τοῦ Εὐνομίου ἐπινοηθεῖσαν διὰ τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ ὀνομασίας εἰς ἀπάτην τῶν ἀκροωμένων ἐπικεκρυμμένην εἰδωλολατρείαν σοφῶς καὶ ἐντέχνως διελέγχει. (GNO I 11,8-12).

22 η'. Εἶθ' οὕτως τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ οὐσίαν ἀπαράλλακτον δείκνυσιν· ἐν ᾧ καὶ πολλὰς παραλλαγὰς καὶ ἁρμονίας ἐκδιδάσκει, τήν τε μορφὴν καὶ σφραγῖδα καὶ χαρακτῆρα διασαφῶν. (GNO I 11,13-16).

23 θ'. Ἔπειτα οὐσίαν τε καὶ γέννησιν διασαφήσας τὴν τοῦ Εὐνομίου κενολογίαν καὶ φλυαρίαν κροτάλῳ ἐοικέναι ἀποκαλεῖ. (GNO I 11,17-19).

24 ι'. Εἶτα τὰ περὶ τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς γεννήσεως παρὰ τοῦ μεγάλου Βασιλείου ῥηθέντα ὡς παρὰ Εὐνομίου κακῶς διαβληθέντα σοφῶς διελέγξας τὸν λόγον πληροῖ. (GNO I 11,20-22).

progression ne se dégage pas clairement, et il n'est pas aisé de saisir les points sur lesquels l'argumentation aurait avancé au terme de ce tome.

II Mouvements de l'argumentation nysséenne

Une fois reconstitué le schéma d'ensemble, on peut entrer avec plus de précision dans les modalités de l'argumentation de Grégoire, à travers deux aspects principaux : ce qui relève des pratiques de réfutation du texte adverse, d'une part, et ce qui se rapporte davantage à l'élaboration de la réflexion nysséenne. Il est évident que les deux dimensions sont étroitement liées dans le texte ; toutefois, les méthodes employées ne sont pas les mêmes et ne relèvent pas nécessairement du même type d'analyse.

1 *Réfuter Eunome*

Dans un premier temps, on s'attachera aux méthodes de la réfutation : si le cœur du débat entre Eunome et Grégoire est de nature théologique, les moyens employés pour réduire l'adversaire à quia ne se rattachent pas tous à ce champ. L'évêque de Nysse ne recule pas même devant des attaques que le lecteur d'aujourd'hui jugera peut-être déplacées dans un débat sur la Trinité, ainsi quand Grégoire se réfère au père d'Eunome (*CE* III 2,164) : certes, la mention du géniteur de son adversaire vise à montrer combien il est odieux de séparer Père et Fils en Dieu, au point d'en faire deux êtres étrangers l'un à l'autre, mais suggérer que les liens entre Eunome et son père ne sont pas des liens de nature relève aussi d'un registre injurieux lié à la parenté, bien connu et diffusé à toute époque, qui rejoint les attaques sur l'origine, la formation et la profession tant d'Aèce que d'Eunome, qui sont largement développées dans la première partie du livre I[25].

À un niveau du débat un peu plus élevé, Grégoire signale fréquemment la présence de contradictions dans l'argumentation de son adversaire ; ce trait, qui n'est pas propre au tome 2[26], appartient plus largement à toute littérature

25 Sur cet aspect, voir en particulier le commentaire de J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa, Contra Eunomium I, 1-146,* eingeleitet, übersetzt und kommentiert, Patrologia 2, Francfort 1993.

26 On en trouve en effet un exemple dès le début du tome 1 (*CE* III 1,4-10), et en particulier l'introduction du second fragment, rapproché du premier sans tenir compte de l'ordre du texte eunomien précisément pour mettre en évidence la contradiction : « Car pour le moment, je passerai sur la continuité des arguments construits selon l'enchainement logique en son discours, de façon à ce que la contradiction avec ce qu'il a écrit n'échappe pas, obscurcie par la lecture de ce qui est placé dans l'intervalle. » (Τέως γὰρ τὸ συνεχὲς

de controverse[27]. Toutefois, c'est loin d'être le seul type d'argument qu'utilise l'évêque de Nysse pour mettre en cause non seulement le contenu mais aussi la forme du discours adverse.

Une première méthode consiste à déplacer l'argumentation de l'adversaire d'un niveau de réalité à un autre, en particulier de la divinité à la création ou inversement. Une telle démarche est grandement facilitée dans la mesure où Grégoire ne cite que des extraits du texte adverse : il peut ainsi laisser de côté les indices qui orienteraient le lecteur du texte eunomien vers l'un ou l'autre niveau. On en trouve un bon exemple dès le début du deuxième tome ; en effet, le dernier fragment d'Eunome cité dans le tome 1 (*CE* III 1,127-129), et en particulier sa finale, insiste sur la différence de signification de l'engendrement selon qu'il est conçu dans le cadre terrestre ou dans le cas du Verbe[28] ; le premier fragment cité dans le tome 2 (*CE* III 2,1) concerne expressément les corps, sur terre, ce qui est d'ailleurs confirmé par l'emploi du pluriel tout au long de ce fragment[29]. L'argumentation d'Eunome semblait donc porter sur la génération dans le cadre terrestre et créé, et supposait un autre niveau de

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ὑπερβήσομαι τῶν κατὰ τὸ ἀκόλουθον τούτοις ἐν τῷ λόγῳ συντεταγμένων, ὡς ἂν μὴ διαλάθοι τῶν γεγραμμένων ἡ ἐναντίωσις, τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῶν διὰ μέσου παρεγκειμένων συσκιασθεῖσα. *CE* III 1,7 [GNO II 6,3-6]).

27 L. Castagnoli, *Ancient Self-Refutation : the Logic and History of the Self-Refutation Argument from Democritus to Augustine*, Cambridge 2010.

28 Voir en particulier *CE* III 1,129 (GNO II 47,9-16) : « *Si de tels noms sont attribués de manière tout à fait véridique au Dieu monogène et ne contiennent pas l'indication de sa nature,* ils disent qu'*il suit de là que le signifié de fils n'est pas non plus employé selon l'usage qui prévaut pour expliquer sa nature mais qu'ils découvrent pour ce vocable précis une signification différente de celle qui est commune et immédiate.* » (εἰ δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ἀληθῶς ἐπιλέγεται τῷ μονογενεῖ θεῷ καὶ τῆς φύσεως οὐ περιέχει τὴν ἔνδειξιν, ἀκόλουθον εἶναι λέγουσι μηδὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸ σημαινόμενον κατὰ τὴν ἐπικρατοῦσαν συνήθειαν εἰς τὴν τῆς φύσεως ἑρμηνείαν παραλαμβάνειν, ἀλλ' ἐξευρίσκειν τινὰ σημασίαν καὶ ταύτης τῆς φωνῆς ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν κοινήν τε καὶ πρόχειρον.)

29 *CE* III 1,2 (GNO II 52,4-15) : « *Qui est si insouciant, en effet, et si inattentif à la nature des choses, pour ne pas reconnaître que parmi tous les corps qui, sur terre, en ce qu'ils engendrent et sont engendrés, agissent et pâtissent, à ce qu'on en examine, ceux qui engendrent se trouvent par nature faire part de leur propre essence et ceux qui sont engendrés, recevoir la même, puisque sont communs la cause matérielle et l'apport affluant de l'extérieur, que ceux qui sont engendrés le sont conformément à la passion et ceux qui engendrent conformément à la nature détiennent une activité qui n'est pas pure du fait que la nature est liée à des passions de tout genre ?* » (τίς γὰρ οὕτως ἀμελὴς καὶ τῆς τῶν ὄντων φύσεως ἀνεπίσκεπτος, ὡς ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι τῶν σωμάτων, ὅσα περὶ γῆν ἐν τῷ γεννᾶν καὶ γεννᾶσθαι, ποιεῖν τε καὶ πάσχειν ἐξεταζόμενα τά τε γεννῶντα μεταδίδωσι τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας καὶ τὰ γεννώμενα τῆς αὐτῆς μεταλαμβάνειν πέφυκεν, ἅτε κοινῆς οὔσης τῆς ὑλικῆς αἰτίας καὶ τῆς ἔξωθεν ἐπιρρεούσης χορηγίας, τά τε γεννώμενα γεννᾶται

description appliqué au Fils, avant ce que Grégoire nous a conservé dans le deuxième fragment de ce tome (*CE* III 2,28) et qui s'attache justement à écarter, pour l'engendrement du Fils, toute conception liée à la création terrestre. L'évêque de Nysse, au contraire, s'attache d'emblée à montrer que le discours d'Eunome est insupportable parce qu'il applique des conceptions terrestres à l'engendrement divin. Il fait donc reposer sa réfutation sur un déplacement volontaire de la pensée d'Eunome, afin de la repousser plus aisément.

La paraphrase permet également à Grégoire de déplacer incidemment l'objet du discours, de façon à écarter des distinctions pourtant clairement établies par Eunome. Ainsi, le fragment 2[30] est nettement destiné à séparer le mode de venue à l'être du Verbe de celui de la création ; toutefois, l'évêque de Nysse le paraphrase en introduisant comme sujet la terre, puis prolonge cette première interprétation en ajoutant l'exemple du forgeron et de ses outils[31].

Grégoire procède également par ajouts, apparemment anodins, mais qui modifient le texte de son adversaire ou lui confèrent une tonalité supplémentaire ; ainsi, l'addition du complément « d'une souillure » (ῥύπου) pour qualifier l'activité non purifiée (ἐνέργειάν τινα μὴ καθαρεύουσαν, *CE* III 2,8 [GNO II 54,14-15]), alors même que le mot n'apparaît jamais dans les textes d'Eunome conservés, et que Grégoire le reprend ensuite à deux reprises pour caractériser soit le discours de son adversaire, soit son objet[32]. L'ajout est particulièrement important pour la thèse de Grégoire, puisqu'il lui permet de caractériser ce qu'il présente comme l'objet d'Eunome d'une manière telle qu'il ne puisse être rapproché sans scandale de la nature divine. Si l'évêque de Nysse ne déforme pas la pensée de son adversaire, il en accentue au moins certains traits afin de la rendre moins acceptable.

D'autres procédés ne sont pas plus anodins, ainsi lorsque Grégoire présente, immédiatement après le passage que nous venons d'étudier, une formulation qui lui est propre comme une affirmation d'Eunome : « je ne sais ce qu'il a pâti,

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κατὰ πάθος καὶ τὰ γεννῶντα κατὰ φύσιν οὐ καθαρὰν ἴσχει τὴν ἐνέργειαν διὰ τὸ παντοίοις πάθεσι συνεζεῦχθαι τὴν φύσιν;)

30 *CE* III 2,28 [GNO II 61,10-15] : « *la substance du Fils se trouve être engendrée du Père. Elle n'a pas été mise au jour selon une extension, elle n'a pas été détachée, selon un écoulement ou une division, de l'unité de nature avec qui l'a engendrée, elle n'a pas été rendue parfaite par un accroissement, elle n'a pas reçu sa forme d'une altération, mais a obtenu l'être par la seule volonté de celui qui l'a engendrée.* » (γεγεννῆσθαι παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν. οὐ κατὰ ἔκτασιν προβληθεῖσαν, οὐ κατὰ ῥεῦσιν ἢ διαίρεσιν τῆς τοῦ γεννήσαντος συμφυΐας ἀποσπασθεῖσαν, οὐ κατὰ αὔξησιν τελειωθεῖσαν, οὐ κατὰ ἀλλοίωσιν μορφωθεῖσαν, μόνῃ δὲ τῇ βουλήσει τοῦ γεννήσαντος τὸ εἶναι λαχοῦσαν.)

31 *CE* III 2,29-33 (GNO II 61,17-63,2).

32 *CE* III 2,15 (GNO II 56,23-24) ; 24 (GNO II 60,7).

lui qui dit ne laisser rien de ce qui est insaisissable hors de sa connaissance en l'excès de sa sagesse et annonce expliquer la génération indicible du Fils (cf. Is 53,8), pour s'éloigner de ce qui était proposé… »[33]. Le terme ἄληπτος n'est pas attesté chez Eunome ; il est en revanche fréquent dans les critiques de Grégoire contre son adversaire[34]. Le propos débouche en outre sur une autre attaque, également fréquente dans les traités contre Eunome, et qui concerne les prétentions d'Eunome à la sagesse[35] ; on notera qu'ici, c'est clairement Grégoire qui prête ce type de propos à son adversaire, sans aucun point d'appui dans les fragments de lui que nous avons conservés.

On relèvera enfin que certains éléments de la réfutation reposent aussi sur des déplacements de sens des mots ; dans ce type de configuration, il n'est pas toujours aisé de faire la part de réelles mécompréhensions entre les deux auteurs et de la mauvaise foi éventuellement mise en œuvre par l'évêque de Nysse pour favoriser ses attaques. Ainsi, dans la deuxième partie du fragment 3a, la compréhension du texte d'Eunome n'est pas évidente, en particulier pour l'adjectif ἀκοινώνητον : « Seul le Fils, parce qu'il est constitué par l'activité du Père, possède sans communion la (sa ?) nature et la relation à celui qui l'a engendré » (μόνος δὲ ὁ υἱός, φησί, τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐνεργείᾳ συστὰς ἀκοινώνητον ἔχει τήν τε φύσιν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν γεγεννηκότα σχέσιν, *CE* III 2,73 [GNO II 76,13-15]).

Grégoire interprète nettement cet extrait, et en particulier cet adjectif, dans le sens d'une négation de la relation et de la communauté de nature entre Père et Fils, comme il l'explicite dans les lignes qui suivent : en effet, la réfutation de l'évêque de Nysse part d'une supposée contradiction entre la fin du premier extrait de l'*Apologie de l'apologie* cité au tome 1 (*CE* III 1,4 [GNO II 4,23-25]) et la fin du fragment 3a qui venait d'être cité[36]. Pour Grégoire, en effet, Eunome a affirmé dans ce dernier texte que le Fils ne possède pas la même nature que

33 *CE* III 2,8 (GNO II 54,17-20) : οὐκ οἶδα τί παθὼν ὁ τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι τῆς σοφίας μηδὲν τῶν ἀλήπτων ἔξω τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γνώσεως καταλείπεσθαι λέγων καὶ τὴν ἄρρητον τοῦ υἱοῦ γέννησιν ἑρμηνεύειν ἐπαγγελλόμενος, ἀποστὰς τῶν προκειμένων.

34 *CE* I 575 ; II 79,195,427-429 ; III 2,8 ; 5,49 ; 8,1,12 ; voir l'analyse proposée à partir de plusieurs images employées par Grégoire dans M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse…*, 155-157. Voir aussi *Deit. Fil.* (GNO X.2) 121,2 (id., « *De deitate Filii et Spiritus sancti et in Abraham* », in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa : The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17-20 September 2008)*, SVChr 106, Leiden 2011, 277-311, ici 286 et n. 37). Le mot est aussi important chez Grégoire pour dépeindre ce qu'est Dieu ; voir par exemple *CE* I 368-369 (et accessoirement 668) ; II 435 ; III 1,107.

35 M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse…*, 69-81, et en particulier 79-81.

36 *CE* III 2,74-77 (GNO II 76,15-77,24).

le Père ni n'est en relation avec lui[37] ; l'adjectif ἀκοινώνητος porterait donc à la fois sur φύσιν et σχέσιν, ce qui est normal vu sa position antéposée au verbe et la double coordination τε . . . καὶ qui unit les deux substantifs, mais aurait pour complément πρὸς τὸν γεγεννηκότα, groupe situé dans l'enclave entre l'article et σχέσιν, ce qui est plus discutable[38]. Au contraire, il semble que, dans le texte d'Eunome, l'adjectif en question est employé de manière absolue, afin d'écarter toute communion du Fils, quant à sa nature ou à sa relation au Père, avec tous les autres êtres ; autrement dit, il sert à Eunome à souligner les liens particuliers, de nature et de relation, qui unissent le Fils au Père, du fait qu'il est le produit d'une activité du Père, contrairement aux créatures qui sont rejetées à un niveau inférieur dans la mesure où elles sont le produit d'une activité du Fils[39]. Ce sens absolu de l'adjectif est bien attesté[40] et est surtout confirmé par la suite du texte eunomien[41]. L'interprétation de Grégoire sert évidemment sa réfutation, bien plus que le sens qu'Eunome donnait visiblement au mot ; s'il est tentant de considérer que l'évêque de Nysse fait ici preuve de mauvaise foi, on ne peut exclure totalement une erreur involontaire[42].

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37 Voir en particulier *CE* III 2,77 (GNO II 77,16-21) : « Il lui a plu de dire que *la substance engendrée* possédait conformément à la nature *l'appellation de Fils* : aussitôt, comme des gens endormis, ils ont acquiescé à ses paroles. Il a changé de nouveau son discours pour le contraire et nie au Fils la relation à celui qui l'a engendré : de nouveau ses très chers refusent ensemble également cela . . . » (ἤρεσεν αὐτῷ τὴν γεννηθεῖσαν οὐσίαν προσφυῶς τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ προσηγορίαν ἔχειν εἰπεῖν· εὐθὺς καθάπερ οἱ νυστάζοντες τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἐπένευσαν. μετέθετο πάλιν πρὸς τοὐναντίον τὸν λόγον καὶ ἀρνεῖται τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν πρὸς τὸν γεγεννηκότα σχέσιν· πάλιν οἱ φίλτατοι καὶ τούτῳ συνανανεύουσιν . . .).

38 C'est ainsi que le comprend S. G. Hall dans sa traduction : « The Son, subsisting by the Father's act, has nothing in common in his nature and his relation with the one who begot him. » (ci-dessus p. 86).

39 C'est ainsi que le comprennent tant C. Moreschini, « Ma soltanto il Figlio, il quale sussiste grazie all'operazione del Padre, possiede non comunicata con altri il rapporto con colui che lo ha generato » (C. Moreschini, *Teologia trinitaria* . . ., 391) que B. Pottier, « Mais seul le Fils, constitué par l'énergie du Père, possède sans communion, sa nature et sa relation à celui qui l'a engendré » (B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ* . . ., 486).

40 Voir par exemple *LSJ. s.v.* I.2, dont les exemples sont bibliques ou d'époque impériale.

41 Voir en particulier *CE* III 2,125 (GNO II 93,22-25) : « puisque, dit-il, ni la substance engendrée ne laisse de place pour la communauté avec quelque autre – car elle est monogène – ni l'activité du producteur n'est reconnue commune » (ἅτε δή, φησί, μήτε τῆς γεννηθείσης οὐσίας ἑτέρῳ τινὶ χώραν εἰς κοινωνίαν καταλιπούσης· μονογενὴς γάρ· μήτε τῆς τοῦ ποιήσαντος ἐνεργείας κοινῆς θεωρουμένης). Les renvois suggérés par C. Moreschini, *Teologia trinitaria*, n. 55[bis], 391/560 (*CE* III 2,104 ; 117) ne sont pas pertinents pour la question soulevée ici.

42 Les emplois de l'adjectif ἀκοινώνητος chez Grégoire sont souvent construits avec le génitif ou πρός et l'accusatif (*An. et res.* 101,22 ; 124,29 ; *Antirrh.* 137,29 ; *Beat.* IV 120,15 ; *CE* I 360 ;

On trouve encore un autre exemple de ce type, quoique moins radical, à propos du fragment 3c[43] : Eunome affirme en effet la différence absolue qui sépare le Fils des créatures, en introduisant entre eux une rupture du même type que celle que Grégoire place entre créé et incréé, tandis que l'évêque de Nysse feint de comprendre qu'il s'agit d'une question de comparaison au sein d'un même niveau de réalité.

Ces différents éléments concourent donc à réfuter l'adversaire, soit en ridiculisant sa position, soit en la réduisant à une thèse à laquelle il est plus aisé de répondre. Il est essentiel de les relever pour mesurer la part de déformation que subit le texte d'Eunome dans la réfutation nysséenne, comme on a pu le voir à propos du fragment 3a, mais aussi pour évaluer la portée de la réponse de Grégoire : en effet, lorsque la thèse adverse est trop fortement déplacée, la démonstration de l'évêque de Nysse n'atteint pas véritablement les positions d'Eunome, même si les développements théologiques qu'il propose peuvent bien évidemment présenter par ailleurs une valeur en soi.

2 *Apport nysséen*

Cependant, une fois notés ces procédés polémiques, il est possible de mieux mesurer le cœur de la réponse élaborée par Grégoire de Nysse, ses points forts.

a Φυσιολογία

Le premier mouvement qui domine est celui d'une opposition, vigoureusement tracée par Grégoire, entre deux domaines du discours, celui qui porte sur Dieu et celui qui porte sur la création[44]. Bien entendu, Eunome est accusé de confondre les deux domaines, quand Grégoire, au contraire, les distinguerait clairement. Un terme revient de manière frappante dans ce second tome, φυσιολογία, alors même qu'il n'est pas courant dans le reste de l'œuvre de

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II 368,518 ; III 2,10 ; 6,43,45 ; 10,53 ; *Hex.* 14 25,5 ; 55 65,15 ; *Op. hom.* 153,48 ; *Perf.* 201,3-4 ; *Ref.* 40,99), mais le plus souvent de manière absolue : *CE* I 277,278,511 ; II 392 ; III 1,15,88 ; III 2,10,100,101 ; 5,41,45 ; *An. et res.* 25,27 ; 109,46 ; 116,6 (PG); *Antirrh.* 144,21 ; *Benef.* 103,3 ; *Eusth.* 10,10-11 ; *Op. hom.* 149,25 ; *Or. dom.* III 42,13 ; *Virg.* XVI 2,2. L'interprétation des emplois du mot proposée par le *L.G.* est relativement différente (I, *s.v.*).

43 *CE* III 2,123 (GNO II 92,24-25) : « qu'elle [la substance du Fils] n'est comparable à rien de ce qui advient à l'être par elle et après elle » (οὐδενὶ τῶν δι' αὐτῆς καὶ μετ' αὐτὴν γενομένων συγκρίνεσθαι).

44 Pour une étude de la distinction κτιστόν, ἄκτιστον dans le *Contre Eunome*, voir l'article de X. Batllo dans ce volume, ainsi que sa thèse de doctorat, X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire et polémique trinitaire : le subordinatianisme d'Eunome et la distinction κτιστόν – ἄκτιστον dans le Contre Eunome I de Grégoire de Nysse*, JAC.E. Kleine Reihe 10, Münster, 2013.

l'évêque de Nysse[45]. Il sert à Grégoire à caractériser la démarche d'Eunome et son erreur fondamentale, qui consisterait à appliquer des conceptions propres à la création et une méthode qui n'est valable que pour elle à la recherche sur la nature divine. L'évêque de Nysse souligne à plusieurs reprises l'inadéquation entre la méthode eunomienne et son objet, ou entre la première et celle qu'il propose lui-même[46]. Deux discours bien distincts sont ainsi caractérisés, celui de la φυσιολογία et celui de la θεολογία ; l'Écriture est le garant du second[47] et Grégoire, bien évidemment, s'en revendique. On notera que le

45 *CE* III 2,1 (GNO II 52,1-2, τὴν περὶ τοῦ γεννήματος φυσιολογίαν), 2 (53,2, περὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ φυσιολογία τοιαύτη), 5 (53,22, τῇ σωματικῇ ταύτῃ φυσιολογίᾳ), 15 (56,23-24, τῇ ῥυπώσῃ φυσιολογίᾳ τοῦ σωματικοῦ τόκου), 24 (60,4-5, ἄλλη τῶν ῥευστῶν σωμάτων φυσιολογία), 25 (60,18, τῆς σωματικῆς γεννήσεως τὴν φυσιολογίαν), 60 (72,16-17, τὴν κάτω γέννησιν τῇ ἀσχήμονι φυσιολογίᾳ), 114 (90,4, τῇ σαρκώδει φυσιολογίᾳ). Chez Grégoire de Nysse, on ne trouve que deux autres occurrences en *CE* II 49 (GNO I 240,6, τὴν ἀδιανόητον ταύτην τῆς ἐπινοίας φυσιολογίαν), 410 (345,25-26, τὴν Ἐπικούρειον αὐτῶν φυσιολογίαν), où les deux emplois sont négatifs et caractérisent la parole d'Eunome ; les quatre derniers emplois interviennent dans un contexte bien différent, qui n'est plus polémique, et servent à décrire simplement l'étude de la nature : *Or. cat.* 37 (GNO III 4,94.19-20) ; *Op. hom.* (PG 44) 128C2 (titre de chapitre, dont la paternité nysséenne n'est pas assurée), 156C2-3 (*idem*), 241B11. Le verbe φυσιολογέω est d'emploi moins marqué ; si on le retrouve à plusieurs reprises dans le *Contre Eunome*, et dans certains cas en contexte polémique (*CE* I 321 ; III 2,20,24 ; 6,65; 8,4), le terme est aussi employé de manière plus neutre (*CE* I 300, 435), ce qui est toujours le cas dans les œuvres qui ne sont pas liées à la polémique avec Eunome (voir en particulier *Macr.* 17,24-26 [*SC* 178 199], où Grégoire oppose φυσιολογοῦσα τὸ ἀνθρώπινον à τὴν θείαν οἰκονομίαν [...] διακαλύπτουσα ; *Moys.* II 96,1-2 [SC 1ter 162], où l'Écriture donne un enseignement sur l'âme, qui a aussi été découvert par la philosophie profane). Ces exemples soulignent tous, cependant, l'existence d'un écart entre deux réalités auxquelles correspondent deux méthode d'enquête. On notera également que le terme φυσιολογία est rare chez les autres Cappadociens, puisqu'il n'est attesté que chez Basile de Césarée : *Hom. in Ps.* XXXII 341A6; *Hom. in Prov.* 388A14 ; Basile (?) *In Is.* 5 148,20 ; 162,20 ; le verbe φυσιολογέω n'est pas plus courant : Grégoire de Nazianze, *Or.* 31 8,15 ; Basile, *Ep.* 16 1,26 ; Basile (?), *In Is.* 10 239.24.

46 Voir en particulier *CE* III 2,15 (GNO II 56,23-25) : « en effaçant par son discours souillé sur la nature de l'engendrement corporel la génération pure, divine et exempte de passion du Seigneur » (τῇ ῥυπώσῃ φυσιολογίᾳ τοῦ σωματικοῦ τόκου τὴν καθαράν τε καὶ θείαν καὶ ἀπαθῆ τοῦ κυρίου παραγραφόμενος γέννησιν), et surtout 24 (60,3-5) : « Certainement la vérité te répond qu'autre est le mystère de la théologie, autre le discours sur la nature des corps souillés » (ἀποκρίνεταί σοι πάντως ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἡ ἀλήθεια, ὅτι ἄλλο θεολογίας ἐστὶ μυστήριον καὶ ἄλλη τῶν ῥευστῶν σωμάτων φυσιολογία).

47 L'exemple cité précédemment (*CE* III 2,24) se trouve précisément à la charnière entre la présentation de la théologie johannique à partir du prologue du quatrième Évangile (*CE* III 2,16-23) et la confrontation des positions d'Eunome et de Jean (*CE* III 2,24-27).

terme φυσιολογία est totalement absent des œuvres conservées d'Eunome : il s'agit bien d'un terme polémique de Grégoire, pour réduire et caractériser la démarche de son adversaire par opposition à la sienne.

Plus loin dans le *Contre Eunome*, Grégoire montre que même ce domaine des sciences naturelles n'est pas maîtrisé par Eunome[48]. Toutefois, dans le tome 2, l'attaque porte principalement sur le type de discours choisi pour décrire la venue à l'être du Fils : dans la ligne des traits relevés ci-dessus dans le cadre de l'analyse de la polémique, où l'on a vu que Grégoire s'employait à déformer le discours eunomien afin d'appliquer au Fils ce qui porte en fait sur les êtres de la création, l'élaboration théologique qui répond à Eunome s'appuie également sur ce principe : le discours de l'adversaire est rejeté dans les bas-fonds de la nature créée et corporelle, tandis que Grégoire se présente comme un simple transmetteur du mystère exposé par l'Écriture, et en particulier par l'enseignant véritable qu'est le Seigneur lui-même ou ses disciples les plus proches. À ce titre, il n'est pas étonnant de noter que l'exposé nysséen s'appuie de manière affichée sur des relais scripturaires, et en particulier sur des lieux johanniques où le discours sur la nature spirituelle et incréée est clairement distingué de l'explication de la nature corporelle et créée.

b Exégèse et Écriture sainte

En effet, lorsque l'Écriture est convoquée pour la première fois de manière massive dans le tome 2, c'est pour un usage directement polémique : Grégoire compare en effet Eunome à Nicodème, pour rappeler comment ce dernier ne parvenait pas à sortir des notions corporelles, si bien que le Seigneur dût corriger la pensée de son interlocuteur :

> je ne sais ce qu'il a subi, lui qui dit ne laisser rien de ce qui est insaisissable hors de sa connaissance en l'excès de sa sagesse et annonce expliquer la génération indicible du Fils[49], pour s'éloigner de ce qui était proposé et, semblable à une anguille[50], plonger dans le bourbier[51] vaseux des

48 Voir en particulier le passage célèbre sur la fourmi, *CE* III 8 3-4, avec les références données dans M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 87-88, n. 135.

49 *Cf.* Is 53,8.

50 Pour cette image, cf. Aristophane, *Cavaliers*, 864-867, avec la scolie *ad loc.* ; cf. également *Souda* T, 187.

51 Voir M. Aubineau, « Le thème du "bourbier" dans la littérature grecque profane et chrétienne », *Recherches de Science religieuse* 47 (1959) 185-214 : on peut en retenir plusieurs rapprochements possibles qui tous éclairent l'emploi qui est fait ici de l'image. Tout d'abord, le texte de Platon, *Phédon*, 69c, et son interprétation par Plotin, *Ennéades*, I, 6 [1], 6, 5, c'est-à-dire le bourbier auquel est condamnée l'âme impure ; mais on retiendra

raisonnements, à la manière de ce Nicodème nocturne[52], qui, alors que le Seigneur lui enseignait la *naissance d'en haut*[53], était entraîné par ses raisonnements vers le sein dans *la matrice*[54] et se demandait comment

surtout Platon, *République*, VII 533d, à propos de l'œil de l'âme, que l'on peut rapprocher de Plotin, *Ennéades*, I 6 [1], 5, 38 ; si les termes usuels sont ceux du bourbier et du sensible, Grégoire déplace ici légèrement le propos, passant à un rapprochement du bourbier et de la ratiocination, ce qui revient à faire s'équivaloir 'sensible' et 'raison raisonnante', et à les condamner ensemble, par opposition à une connaissance ouverte à Dieu. Cf. sur ce point Basile, *Traité du Saint-Esprit*, XXII 168B ; on peut également, avec M. Aubineau (199), rapprocher ce passage de *Perf.* 211,23, à propos des passions qui s'appliquent comme une boue sur l'âme. Le thème du bourbier de l'impiété, étudié par M. Aubineau, 201-210, n'est pas ici directement présent, même s'il peut être une autre justification à l'emploi de l'image, en arrière-plan.

52 Cf. Jn 3,1-21. Cf. Grégoire de Nazianze, *Or.* 45, 656D, seul exemple de l'emploi de cet adjectif pour qualifier Nicodème qui ne soit pas postérieur à Grégoire – cependant, l'emploi n'est pas négatif chez Grégoire de Nazianze, qui évoque son rôle dans l'ensevelissement du Christ. Tous les emplois postérieurs semblent aller dans le sens du Théologien – voire le citer – sauf Philagathe Cerameus, *Homélies* III, 2, qui dépend probablement de l'évêque de Nysse (cf. *infra* n. 54).

53 Pour l'interprétation de l'adverbe ἄνωθεν en Jn 3, aussi bien chez les Pères que dans les versions anciennes, voir P.-M. Boucher, « Γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν : la valeur de l'adverbe ἄνωθεν en Jn 3, 3 et 7 », *Revue biblique* 115 (2008) 191-215, 568-595. Cf. également *Or. cat.* (GNO III/4 101,19-102,3).

54 Je ne retiens pas la correction de W. Jaeger qui, contre tous les manuscrits et contre les éditions antérieures, corrige κόλπον en κόπον ; la correction ne facilite pas le sens de la phrase, au contraire (« la fatigue dans la matrice » ?), et ne trouve aucun parallèle exact chez Grégoire. On trouve encore chez Philagathe Cerameus (*Hom.* 3, 2) un témoignage, il est vrai assez tardif et postérieur aux plus anciens manuscrits conservés (début du XII[e] s.), en faveur de la leçon commune (πρὸς τὸν ἐν μήτρᾳ κόλπον τοῖς λογισμοῖς κατεσύρετο), citation exacte de *CE* III 2,8 (GNO II 54,23-24) ; un tel rapprochement, dans le cas d'une expression qui n'est pas attestée par ailleurs, vient confirmer la connaissance du *Contre Eunome* par cet auteur (cf. *supra* n. 52). On peut donc ajouter ce passage à ceux relevés par G. Rossi Taibbi, *Filagato da Cerami, Omelie per i vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno. Volume I : omelie per le feste fisse*, Palermo 1969, XLVI-XLVIII, qui signale la bonne connaissance de Grégoire de Nysse par Philagathe Cerameus et la grande estime qu'il avait pour lui. Un autre texte de Grégoire, toutefois, fournit la clef de ce passage : en *Or. cat.* (GNO III/4 101,19-102,3), Grégoire reprend l'exemple de Nicodème ; or on y trouve une formule très proche de celle qui nous arrête : ἐπὶ τὸν μητρῷον κόλπον τοῖς λογισμοῖς κατεσύρετο (101,22-23). On peut d'ailleurs hésiter, dans le *Discours catéchétique*, sur la traduction de l'adjectif μητρῷον : s'agit-il du sein *maternel*, ou bien plus précisément du sein *de la matrice* ? L'expression, avec l'adjectif, se retrouve également en *Deit. Fil.* (GNO X/2 141,14), pour expliquer Ps 57, 4 : ἀπηλλοτριώθησαν οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἀπὸ μήτρας, ἐπλανήθησαν ἀπὸ γαστρός, ἐλάλησαν ψεύδη. Cf. également Basile de Césarée, *Qu'il ne faut pas s'attacher*

> l'on peut se trouver de nouveau, pour la *seconde fois*, à l'intérieur de la cavité, en disant « *Comment cela peut-il se faire ?* »[55], croyant qu'il montrerait, par l'impossibilité pour le vieillard d'être porté de nouveau dans les entrailles maternelles, que la génération spirituelle est sans consistance. Mais le Seigneur corrige la notion erronée de celui-ci[56] précisément, en disant que les propriétés de la chair et celles de l'esprit sont non-mêlées[57] : que celui-là[58] se corrige aussi lui-même pour des questions semblables, s'il le veut[59] !

Au thème du discours d'Eunome comme φυσιολογία, présent dès le début de ce tome, nous l'avons vu, Grégoire oppose donc le discours divin ou, ici, spirituel, et le fait à partir de la voix et de l'action même du Christ. Le passage de l'entretien avec Nicodème est certes employé par d'autres auteurs pour rejeter les conceptions corporelles dans le cas des phénomènes liés à la divinité, mais l'emploi polémique contre des tenants d'un statut inférieur du Fils au sein de la divinité ne semble pas attesté avant ce texte[60].

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aux biens du monde (CPG 2866), 544D, 549A. On trouve par la suite d'assez nombreuses attestations de la formule avec l'adjectif.

55 Jn 3,9 ; variante textuelle : ταῦτα NT (sans variante attestée) : τοῦτο GNys. J. A. Brooks, *The New Testament Text of Gregory of Nyssa*, Atlanta 1991, 112.

56 C'est-à-dire Nicodème.

57 Cf. Jn 3,6, qui est reformulé en termes beaucoup plus théoriques que l'expression évangélique.

58 C'est-à-dire Eunome.

59 οὐκ οἶδα τί παθὼν ὁ τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι τῆς σοφίας μηδὲν τῶν ἀλήπτων ἔξω τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γνώσεως καταλείπεσθαι λέγων καὶ τὴν ἄρρητον τοῦ υἱοῦ γέννησιν ἑρμηνεύειν ἐπαγγελλόμενος, ἀποστὰς τῶν προκειμένων ἐγχέλυος δίκην εἰς τὸν ἰλυώδη βόρβορον τῶν λογισμῶν καταδύεται κατὰ τὸν νυκτερινὸν ἐκεῖνον Νικόδημον, ὃς τὴν ἄνωθεν γέννησιν τοῦ κυρίου διδάσκοντος πρὸς τὸν ἐν μήτρᾳ κόλπον τοῖς λογισμοῖς κατεσύρετο, καὶ πῶς ἂν ἐκ δευτέρου πάλιν ἐντὸς τῆς νηδύος γένοιτο διηπόρει λέγων Πῶς δύναται τοῦτο γενέσθαι; νομίζων τῷ μὴ δύνασθαι τὸν πρεσβύτην διὰ σπλάγχνου πάλιν κυοφορηθῆναι μητρῴου τὴν πνευματικὴν γέννησιν διελέγξειν ἀσύστατον. ἀλλὰ κἀκείνου τὴν πεπλανημένην ὑπόληψιν διορθοῦται ὁ κύριος, ἄμικτα λέγων εἶναι τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ἰδιώματα, καὶ οὗτος ἑαυτὸν ἐν τοῖς ὁμοίοις, εἰ βούλεται, διορθούσθω. *CE* III 2,8-9 (GNO II 54.17-55.6).

60 On trouve cependant des emplois proches chez Jean Chrysostome (*Sur l'égalité du Père et du Fils*, VII, 210-225 [SC 396]), mais surtout dans un contexte parénétique (*Hom. sur Jean*, 25 [PG 59 149-150], 26 [PG 59 153-154]). Voir également Cyrille d'Alexandrie, *Commentaire sur Jean* (PG 73 243A-B). Athanase ne l'emploie jamais, non plus qu'Épiphane ou Grégoire de Nazianze. Les mentions du personnage sont le plus souvent liées à l'épisode de l'ensevelissement de Jésus.

On notera que cette parole d'autorité divine est déjà empruntée à l'Évangile de Jean ; cette référence constitue donc comme une annonce de l'élément suivant dans la réfutation (*CE* III 2,16-27), qui repose précisément sur une exégèse du prologue johannique, opposée ensuite à l'interprétation que, selon Grégoire, Eunome proposerait de l'engendrement divin. Sans revenir dans le détail sur cette explication du prologue, on rappellera simplement que celui-ci est présenté, de manière paradoxale, comme un texte pédagogique destiné à conduire progressivement l'auditeur ou le lecteur vers une compréhension purifiée de l'engendrement dans le cas du Fils. En effet, l'évêque de Nysse montre que l'évangéliste a d'abord fait usage de termes qui excluent toute passion ou notion charnelle (Principe, Verbe, Dieu) et de tournures syntaxiques qui soulignent la coexistence éternelle du Père et du Fils, avant d'introduire une analogie avec l'engendrement humain, afin que celle-ci soit comprise d'une manière appropriée et spirituelle[61]. Le but de ce long développement est double : il permet en effet à Grégoire à la fois de montrer que le mode de présentation de l'engendrement qu'a choisi Eunome n'est pas adéquat, et de rappeler que l'autorité de l'Écriture, et en l'occurrence l'autorité théologique par excellence qu'est Jean, est de son côté et s'oppose explicitement aux positions d'Eunome. En outre, la présentation du prologue comme un texte pédagogique permet à Grégoire de suggérer qu'Eunome est suffisamment inattentif ou stupide pour ne pas comprendre même un texte destiné aux « auditeurs inexpérimentés », écrit pour ne pas induire en erreur des gens au « caractère enfantin et sans éducation[62] ».

Sans entrer dans une analyse détaillée de tous les usages de l'Écriture dans ce deuxième tome, on notera cependant qu'on y trouve, comme dans plusieurs autres tomes de ce troisième livre, un développement exégétique relativement autonome, consacré à l'expression « Premier-né » (πρωτότοκος). Le point de départ de cette explication nysséenne se situe dans le cadre de la réponse que Grégoire apporte au deuxième extrait eunomien de ce tome ; pour montrer que le Fils est supérieur même aux plus hautes créatures du monde intelligible, l'évêque de Nysse commente de manière cursive le premier chapitre de l'Épître aux Hébreux. Or ce rapide parcours l'amène à citer He 1, 6, et l'auteur saisit cette occasion de proposer une interprétation d'ensemble des occurrences pauliniennes de « Premier-né », puisque ce terme et tout ou partie des versets qui l'emploient (Col 1, 15 ; 1, 18 ; Rm 8, 29 ; He 1, 6) ont fait l'objet de nombreuses

61 Voir l'analyse détaillée de ce passage exégétique dans M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 320-342.

62 τὴν ἀγύμναστον ἀκοήν, *CE* III 2,17 (GNO II 57,12) ; τὸ νηπιῶδές τε καὶ ἀπαίδευτον, *CE* III 2,19 (GNO II 58,9).

controverses depuis le début des querelles sur la divinité du Fils. Développant une intuition qu'il emprunte à Athanase, Grégoire de Nysse élabore ici une tentative pour rendre compte de l'ensemble des occurrences pauliniennes dans leur diversité en les articulant selon une série linéaire liée aux naissances et venues du Christ[63]. Ce petit traité exégétique, qui n'est lié de manière organique ni à la réfutation d'Eunome, ni au traité de Grégoire en son ensemble, constitue comme un excursus consacré à l'Écriture. En ce sens, il remplit une fonction dans la réfutation, puisqu'il permet à l'auteur de montrer la cohérence entre ses positions théologiques et la Révélation ; toutefois, il constitue comme un corps étranger dans la démonstration proprement dite[64].

On relèvera enfin que l'ensemble du tome se conclut sur une autre utilisation polémique de l'Écriture, qui répond d'une certaine façon à l'épisode de Nicodème : en effet, Grégoire écarte les critiques d'Eunome contre Basile en rapprochant ce dernier de l'apôtre Paul, confronté aux philosophes à Athènes, et identifie donc Eunome avec les stoïciens et les épicuriens d'alors ; on aura reconnu ici le célèbre discours de Paul à l'Aréopage et les réactions qu'il suscite (Ac 17). Le passage n'est pas utilisé de manière très fréquente dans une situation de controverse[65] ; en revanche, il est repris, de manière plus articulée et plus complète, dans le *Discours sur la divinité du Fils et de l'Esprit*, qui date de fin mai 383 et qui est postérieur à ce tome du *Contre Eunome*[66]. L'Écriture est de nouveau utilisée ici de manière polémique, de façon à discréditer l'adversaire ; ce passage permet en outre à Grégoire de rassembler une attaque scripturaire

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63 Pour une étude de cette section exégétique, voir M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 276-292. On notera que Grégoire utilise, outre Athanase, un passage de Grégoire de Nazianze (*Or.* 40,2 [SC 358 198-201]) qui, une fois transposé du contexte baptismal originel au présent contexte exégétique, est décisif pour l'interprétation nysséenne.

64 L'enchaînement avec ce qui suit indique clairement le statut d'excursus : « Mais il faut retourner à ceux qui unissent la passion à la génération divine . . . » (Ἀλλ' ἐπανιτέον πρὸς τοὺς τῇ θείᾳ γεννήσει τὸ πάθος συνάπτοντας . . .) *CE* III 2,58 (GNO II 71,22).

65 Voir cependant une mention fugitive chez Athanase, *Lettre à Jean et Antiochos*, 2 (AW 2.8 310,9), qui n'est pas relevée par les derniers éditeurs ; Basile de Césarée, *Sur le Saint-Esprit*, XVII 42,13-15 (SC 17bis 396), qui ne développe pas non plus la référence (voir également, de manière plus rapide encore, et dans un contexte non polémique, *Hom. sur le Ps 45*, 8 [PG 29 429A7-9]) ; Grégoire de Nazianze, *Or.* 21 12,11-13 (SC 270 134-135). Pour les usages de l'épisode de l'Aréopage chez les Cappadociens, voir S. Rubenson, « The Cappadocians on the Areopagus », in: J. Børtnes – T. Hägg (eds.), *Gregory of Nazianzus : Images and Reflections*, Copenhague 2006, 113-132 ; plus largement, voir M. Fiedrowicz, « Die Rezeption und Interpretation der paulinischen Areopag-Rede in der patristischen Theologie », *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 111 (2002) 85-105.

66 Pour l'étude de ce texte et la démonstration de l'antériorité de *CE* III 2 (et III 6), voir M. Cassin, « *De deitate Filii et Spiritus sancti* . . . », 290-291.

et un autre trait de son hérésiologie, l'assimilation de l'adversaire aux courants philosophiques hellènes[67], même si le rapprochement reste fugitif dans notre passage, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans le discours de 383. Ici, cependant, la pointe du texte nysséen porte moins sur le rapprochement d'Eunome et des philosophes que sur l'innovation dont il est accusé[68], trait fréquent dans l'hérésiologie.

Cependant, Grégoire n'oppose pas à ce qu'il dépeint comme des nouveautés eunomiennes un clair recours à la tradition ecclésiale. Si celle-ci est bien présente dans le tome 2, c'est en une position seconde, voire secondaire, puisque le Symbole de foi (Nicée) sert de point de comparaison à l'exposé sur le prologue de Jean, mais un point de comparaison qui est clairement subordonné à l'Écriture : il ne s'agit que du « discours simple et familier de notre foi[69] », dont la formulation d'emblée anthropologique pourrait entraîner la chute de l'auditeur inexpérimenté, par opposition à l'exposé johannique[70].

c Engendrement sans passion : du *Contre Eunome* aux *Homélies sur le Cantique*

Là semble bien se situer le cœur de la réflexion de Grégoire au cours de ce deuxième tome : la question de l'engendrement sans passion en Dieu, et de son rapport analogique avec la génération dans le cadre de la création. L'explication du prologue johannique aboutit en effet à la présentation de l'enfantement sans passion de la Vierge. Sans entrer dans le détail de la mariologie nysséenne[71], on

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67 Pour une évaluation critique de ce dossier, voir M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 90-96. Il ressort de l'analyse des différents passages que Grégoire ne propose aucune assimilation probante entre Eunome et un courant philosophique donné ; les rapprochements divers constituent des traits hérésiologiques difficilement conciliables entre eux.

68 *CE* III 2,163-164 (GNO II 106,3-9) « Cela, maintenant encore, les nouveaux *stoïciens* et *épicuriens* (Ac 17,18) le mettent en avant contre l'imitateur de Paul, eux qui *ne se réjouissent de rien d'autre*, comme le récit le dit des Athéniens, *que de dire et d'entendre des nouvelles* (Ac 17,21). En effet, qu'aurait-on pu trouver de plus nouveau : fils d'une activité, père d'une créature, un dieu neuf advenu à partir du non-être et un bien différent d'un bien ? » (ταῦτα καὶ νῦν οἱ νέοι Στωϊκοὶ καὶ Ἐπικούρειοι τῷ μιμητῇ τοῦ Παύλου προφέρουσιν, οἱ εἰς οὐδὲν ἕτερον εὐκαιροῦντες, καθὼς περὶ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἡ ἱστορία φησίν, ἢ εἰς τὸ λέγειν τι καὶ ἀκούειν καινότερον. τί γὰρ ἂν εὑρεθείη τούτων καινότερον· υἱὸς ἐνεργείας καὶ πατὴρ κτίσματος καὶ θεὸς πρόσφατος ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἀναφυόμενος καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθοῦ παρηλλαγμένον;)

69 *CE* III 1,85 (GNO II 33,14-15), τὸν ἁπλοῦν τε καὶ ἰδιωτικὸν τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς πίστεως λόγον.

70 Voir l'analyse de *CE* III 2,17 proposée dans M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 335-336.

71 Sur cette question, voir l'article synthétique de L. F. Mateo-Seco, « Mariology », in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 477-482, qui fournit la bibliographie essentielle. Pour le passage qui

relèvera que Grégoire propose ici une mention rapide et relativement allusive de l'enfantement virginal, non atteint par la passion, comme si ce thème ne faisait pas pour lui difficulté et relevait du contenu déjà élaboré et établi de la foi. Dans le premier tome, si l'évêque de Nysse avait séparé enfantement et passion (*CE* III 1,69-72), il n'avait à aucun moment fait mention de Marie ni d'une naissance dans la chair sans passion[72]. Dans le deuxième tome (*CE* III 2,25-27), au contraire, Grégoire propose une rapide esquisse, largement fondée sur une série de citation scripturaires[73], et qui est essentiellement consacrée à la naissance sans passion du Fils, ou plutôt à l'enfantement de la Vierge, que Grégoire présente comme un fait à part au sein des phénomènes naturels :

> Et moi, j'ajoute aussi cela à ce qui a été dit : je connais un engendrement, et corporel, qui est pur de passions, si bien que là aussi, il est montré que le discours d'Eunome sur la nature à propos de l'engendrement est faux, puisqu'on peut trouver un enfantement corporel qui n'admet pas de passion[74].

On notera en outre que, pour l'évêque de Nysse, cet enfantement de Jésus par Marie, sans passion, semble un point acquis, même pour son adversaire. La réserve aussitôt introduite paraît toutefois indiquer que Grégoire se soucie moins ici de persuader Eunome que de s'adresser à un auditoire déjà convaincu :

> Et après cela, tu crois pure de passions cette génération à partir d'une femme – si du moins tu la crois – tandis que celle qui est divine et sans mélange, qui vient du Père, tu ne l'acceptes pas, de façon à ne pas envisager de passion par rapport à cette génération[75] ?

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nous occupe, voir également le rapide traitement proposé par id., « La mariologia en san Gregorio de Nisa », *Scripta Theologica* 10 (1978) 409-466, ici 451-453.

72 Sauf une allusion rapide au « mystère de la virginité » (τὸ κατὰ τὴν παρθενίαν μυστήριον) dans un résumé de l'histoire du salut (*CE* III 1,55 [GNO II 23,9-10]).

73 Mt 17,5 ; Jn 1,14 ; 1 Tm 3,16 ; Mt 1,20 ; Lc 2,6-7.

74 ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς εἰρημένοις προσθήσω, ὅτι οἶδά τινα καὶ σωματικὴν γέννησιν καθαρεύουσαν πάθους, ὡς καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ψευδῆ τοῦ Εὐνομίου τῆς σωματικῆς γεννήσεως τὴν φυσιολογίαν ἀπελεγχθῆναι, εἴπερ εὑρεθείη σώματος τόκος πάθος οὐ προσδεξάμενος. *CE* III 2,25 (GNO II 60,15-20).

75 εἶτα τὴν μὲν ἐκ γυναικὸς γέννησιν καθαρὰν πάθους εἶναι πιστεύεις, εἴγε πιστεύεις, τὴν δὲ θείαν τε καὶ ἀκήρατον ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς οὐ δέχῃ, ἵνα μὴ πάθος νοήσῃς περὶ τὴν γέννησιν; *CE* III 2,27 (GNO II 60,27-30).

Il n'est pas sans intérêt de rappeler qu'un développement assez proche apparaît dans les *Homélies sur le Cantique*, dans un contexte où interviennent également plusieurs éléments qui sont directement liés au *Contre Eunome* III 2, sans entrer cependant dans le détail d'une comparaison textuelle et de l'analyse des filiations qui peuvent unir les deux œuvres. En effet, une section de la treizième *Homélie sur le Cantique* (7-8 [GNO VI 386,18-390,8]) reproduit d'assez près la thématique et la démarche qui caractérise *CE* III 2,16-27.43-57, à savoir une réflexion qui évoque successivement le prologue johannique, la naissance virginale de Jésus et le titre de « Premier-né ». Le premier point, dans le cadre du commentaire du *Cantique*, est abordé très rapidement :

> [L'épouse] prend donc comme point de départ de son enseignement celui qui nous est proche et familier : en effet, c'est du corps que part sa catéchèse. Or Matthieu aussi a fait de même : parce qu'il a établi la généalogie du mystère selon la chair en partant d'Abraham et de David, il a gardé en réserve pour le grand Jean d'annoncer à ceux qui ont déjà reçu par là l'instruction préliminaire, la bonne nouvelle du Principe qui est conçu de toute éternité et du Verbe qui est conçu avec le Principe[76].

Ce rapide commentaire, qui met en regard le début de l'évangile selon Matthieu et de l'évangile selon Jean, prend en fait le contre-pied de la lecture du prologue johannique qui a été proposée en *CE* III 2,16-23 : en effet, dans ce dernier texte, Grégoire présentait le texte du Théologien comme un modèle de pédagogie, destiné à éviter à l'auditeur inexpérimenté de tomber dans des conceptions corporelles quant à l'engendrement du Fils – on reconnaît là l'influence directe des discussions avec Eunome. Au contraire, dans les *Homélies sur le Cantique*, c'est l'évangile selon Matthieu qui est présenté comme un élément pédagogique, préparatoire, et l'évangile de Jean qui est une correction et un approfondissement du premier. Le changement de perspective est sûrement dû non seulement à la différence de contexte polémique – si Eunome est indirectement présent dans les *Homélies*, c'est à titre second, si ce n'est secondaire – mais aussi au cadre exégétique du *Cantique* (ici Ct 5,10a), qui est interprété par

76 Ἀρχὴν οὖν ποιεῖται τῆς διδασκαλίας τὴν προσεχῆ καὶ οἰκείαν ἡμῖν· ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ σώματος τῆς κατηχήσεως ἄρχεται. ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ ὁ Ματθαῖος πεποίηκεν· ἐκ τοῦ Ἀβραάμ τε καὶ Δαβὶδ γενεαλογήσας τὸ κατὰ σάρκα μυστήριον τῷ μεγάλῳ Ἰωάννῃ ἐταμιεύσατο τοῖς ἤδη διὰ τούτων στοιχειωθεῖσι τὴν ἐξ ἀϊδίου νοουμένην ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸν τῇ ἀρχῇ συγκατανοούμενον λόγον εὐαγγελίσασθαι. *Cant.* XIII 7 (GNO VI 386,18-387,1).

Grégoire comme une désignation de la chair. On retrouve là une confirmation du caractère non linéaire du développement de l'exégèse nysséenne[77].

La section suivante est consacrée à une présentation de la naissance du Fils dans la chair, et les *Homélies sur le Cantique* soulignent avec beaucoup de lyrisme le caractère neuf et inouï de cette naissance (GNO VI 387,13-388,15), avant de présenter l'enfantement sans passion qui a été celui de la Vierge (GNO VI 388,15-389,17)[78]. Ce développement correspond à deux sections de *Contre Eunome* III 2, mais qui se placent dans un ordre inverse : les paragraphes 25-27 présentent en effet une première fois la naissance virginale, en insistant sur l'absence de passions qui la caractérise et en se concentrant sur la figure de Marie, tandis que le motif est également repris un peu plus loin de manière plus brève (§ 51), mais en insistant cette fois sur la nouveauté qui définit cette naissance.

Enfin, la fin de ce passage des *Homélies sur le Cantique* (GNO VI 389,17-390,8) concerne l'explication de trois versets pauliniens qui comportent le titre de « Premier-né » (Col 1,15 ; 1,18 ; Rm 8,29). Il reprend et amende le développement similaire, beaucoup plus fourni, du *Contre Eunome* III 2, en laissant en particulier de côté He 1,6, qui est sans doute écarté dans la mesure où il concerne, selon Grégoire, la seconde venue du Fils[79]. On retiendra enfin que, si le rapprochement de ces deux passages peut laisser penser à un développement linéaire de l'exégèse nysséenne, sous la forme, ici presque caricaturale, du passage d'une exégèse en devenir dans le cadre doctrinal à une exégèse aboutie

77 M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 268-274, 360.

78 Voir l'analyse du passage proposée par L. F. Mateo-Seco, « La mariologia . . . », 431-433, qui ne relève cependant pas le lien avec le texte du *Contre Eunome*.

79 *CE* III 2,43-57 ; pour la comparaison des deux textes, voir M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 291-292. On notera également que toute cette section est sensiblement abrégée dans l'*Épitomé de la chaîne de Procope sur le Cantique* (éd. J.-M. Auwers [CCSG 67], Leuven 2012) : la scholie 244, qui correspond à l'ensemble du passage ici étudié, ne retient aucun des développements adventices à l'exégèse du Cantique lui-même ; elle est composée de la manière suivante, d'après l'analyse de son éditeur : citation de 386,12-20 (qui s'arrête donc avant que ne soit introduite la question des débuts d'évangile, Mt *vs* Jn), résumé de 387,13-388,19 (c'est-à-dire la présentation de l'enfantement inouï du Sauveur par la Vierge), citation de 390,4-7 (où seule la conclusion du développement sur les différentes naissances qui correspondent au titre de Premier-né est conservée). Un tel abrégement est conforme au caractère de la chaîne, tel que la définit son dernier éditeur : le caténiste a en effet sélectionné les extraits, abrégé et résumé de façon à ne retenir que les éléments de ses sources qui étaient en rapport direct avec le texte biblique commenté (J.-M. Auwers, *L'interprétation du Cantique des cantiques à travers les chaînes exégétiques grecques*, Turnhout 2011).

dans le domaine spirituel, la prise en compte de deux autres textes parallèles, respectivement dans la *Réfutation de la Profession de foi* et dans le traité *Sur la perfection*, vient rompre cette série trop ordonnée et rappeler que l'interprétation des Écriture n'est pas marquée, du moins chez l'évêque de Nysse, par un progrès linéaire caractérisé par la reprise des acquis antérieurs pour approfondir l'explication biblique[80].

Dans le *Contre Eunome*, Grégoire résume ensuite la distinction qu'il établit entre différents sens de γέννησις (*CE* III 2,58-61), afin d'établir clairement la possibilité d'une génération sans passion[81]. Or il est notable que l'évêque de Nysse fasse ensuite dériver volontairement son propos, afin de montrer comment engendrer et créer sont deux activités certes distinctes de Dieu, mais deux activités sans passion, contrairement à ce qui se passe pour les hommes (*CE* III 2,67-71). Ce développement annonce l'étape centrale de ce tome, qui intervient seulement plus loin, après plusieurs détours dus pour l'essentiel au fil directeur donné par le texte eunomien ; en effet, ce n'est qu'en *CE* III 2,111-116 que Grégoire revient à la distinction fondamentale entre création et engendrement, après avoir consacré un assez long passage à une remontée laborieuse du niveau des créatures et des rejetons au niveau supérieur de celui qui crée et de celui qui engendre (*CE* III 2,103-108), au moyen de la théorie des relatifs. Toutefois, il faut noter que la distinction est ici davantage affirmée que prouvée, même si les éléments de démonstration antérieurs servent évidemment d'appui à l'évêque de Nysse. Dans ce tome, Grégoire ne propose pas d'étude définitive qui permettrait de caractériser clairement et l'une par rapport à l'autre génération et création ; le fait est dû, sans nul doute, à ce qu'il suit largement la pente donnée par le texte eunomien, mais on a suffisamment vu que l'évêque de Nysse était capable de s'abstraire de ce fil conducteur pour juger qu'il s'agit ici sinon d'un choix délibéré, du moins d'une fin de non recevoir opposée à l'adversaire. Cet élément est d'autant plus notable que Grégoire reproche précisément à Eunome de ne pas démontrer les points essentiels de sa thèse, ceux qui étaient particulièrement débattus (*CE* III 2,89-99).

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80 *Ref.* 73-86 ; *Perf.* 200,4-204,8 ; pour l'étude de cette série exégétique, voir M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse . . .*, 292-297.

81 On trouve plus loin (*CE* III 6,27-48) un exposé plus complet et mieux articulé sur cette notion ; voir M. Harl, « À propos d'un passage du *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire de Nysse : *aporroia* et les titres du Christ en théologie trinitaire », in: *Le Déchiffrement du sens. Études sur l'herméneutique chrétienne d'Origène à Grégoire de Nysse*, Études augustiniennes, série Antiquité 135, Paris 1993, 281-290.

d Théognoste

Bien des éléments de ce deuxième tome justifieraient encore un examen détaillé. La brève mention polémique de Théognoste d'Alexandrie[82] est particulièrement remarquable, étant donné la rareté des témoignages qui nous sont conservés sur cet auteur et son œuvre.

> Et Eunome n'est pas le seul à errer sur ce point quant à l'absurdité de la doctrine, mais il est possible de trouver l'équivalent dans les efforts de Théognoste, qui dit que *Dieu, voulant constituer cet univers, commença par faire exister en premier le Fils, comme une règle de l'œuvre*, sans que cet homme voie non plus l'absurdité de son discours, que ce qui n'existe pas en vue de soi mais du fait de quelque chose d'autre est sûrement de moindre valeur que ce du fait de quoi il est, de même que nous fabriquons un outil agricole en vue de la vie, mais que la charrue n'est pas d'une valeur égale à celle de la vie. Donc, de même, si le Seigneur est du fait du monde, et non pas toute chose du fait du Seigneur[83], toute chose, en vue de quoi ils disent qu'il est, serait de plus grande valeur que le Seigneur. Voilà ce qu'ils établissent encore maintenant par leur discours, par quoi ils confirment que le Fils possède une relation sans intermédiaire à celui qui l'a créé et produit[84].

Il est évident que le but premier de ce développement est polémique, puisqu'il s'agit de déconsidérer Eunome en le rapprochant d'un personnage qui semble visiblement condamnable pour Grégoire, mais dont les positions avaient

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82 L'étude fondamentale sur ce personnage reste celle d'A. von Harnack, *Die Hypotyposen des Theognostus*, TU 24.3, Leipzig 1903. Voir également l'étude de la notice que Photius a consacré à l'une de ses œuvres par G. Anesi, « La notizia di Fozio sulle Hypotyposeis di Teognosto », *Augustinianum* 21 (1981) 491-516. On trouve un bref examen des liens entre ce que l'on sait de Théognoste et l'arianisme dans L. W. Barnard, « The Antecedents of Arius », *Vigiliae Christianae* 24 (1970) 172-188, ici 180-182.

83 Cf. Jn 1, 3.

84 καὶ οὐ μόνος ἐν τούτῳ πεπλάνηται κατὰ τὴν ἀτοπίαν τοῦ δόγματος ὁ Εὐνόμιος, ἀλλ' ἔστι καὶ ἐν τοῖς Θεογνώστῳ πεπονημένοις τὸ ἴσον εὑρεῖν, ὅς φησι τὸν θεὸν βουλόμενον τόδε τὸ πᾶν κατασκευάσαι πρῶτον τὸν υἱὸν οἷόν τινα κανόνα τῆς δημιουργίας προϋποστήσασθαι, οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνος συνιδὼν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ἄτοπον, ὅτι τὸ μὴ ἑαυτοῦ χάριν, ἀλλὰ δι' ἄλλο τι γινόμενον ἀτιμότερόν ἐστι πάντως τοῦ δι' ὃ γίνεται, ὡς τὸ γεωργικὸν ἐργαλεῖον τῆς ζωῆς χάριν ἐπιτηδεύομεν, οὐ μὴν ἐπίσης τιμᾶται τῇ ζωῇ καὶ τὸ ἄροτρον. οὕτω τοίνυν καὶ εἰ διὰ τὸν κόσμον ὁ κύριος, καὶ οὐχὶ δι' ἐκεῖνον τὰ πάντα, προτιμότερα ἂν εἴη τοῦ κυρίου τὰ πάντα ὧν χάριν ἐκεῖνον γενέσθαι λέγουσι. τοῦτο καὶ νῦν διὰ τοῦ λόγου κατασκευάζουσι, δι' ὧν ἀμεσίτευτον ἔχειν τὸν υἱὸν τὴν πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα καὶ πεποιηκότα σχέσιν διϊσχυρίζονται. *CE* III 2,121-122 (GNO II 92,8-22).

pourtant été citées avec éloge par Athanase d'Alexandrie, comme un soutien à ses propres thèses théologiques, tant à propos du Fils que du Saint-Esprit[85]. La citation de Théognoste, qui provient très probablement du 7e livre des *Hypotyposes* décrites par Photius, lequel concernait la création – comme le suggérait déjà A. von Harnack – est sans aucun doute interprétée par l'évêque de Nysse en un sens qu'elle n'avait pas forcément pour son auteur ; en effet, Grégoire y voit une affirmation de l'infériorité du Fils, qui devrait son existence à son but, à savoir la création, ce qui n'était probablement pas son sens initial[86]. L'insertion de ce texte dans le fil argumentatif du *Contre Eunome* n'est pas non plus évident : en effet, Grégoire discute alors un extrait d'Eunome (fragment 3b) qui ne porte pas sur les relations entre Fils et création, non plus que le texte eunomien qui suit immédiatement la citation de Théognoste (fragment 3c, *CE* III 2,123). C'est l'évêque de Nysse qui avait lui-même introduit la notion d'instrument et d'outil, pour discuter l'absence d'intermédiaire (ἀμεσίτευτον) dont Eunome parlait à propos de l'engendrement de la substance. Le rapprochement, de nature hérésiologique, apparaît donc relativement gratuit en terme de doctrine[87] ; il témoigne également de l'ampleur des lectures de Grégoire et de l'obscurité qui recouvre pour nous ses sources : avait-il accès directement à ce traité de Théognoste ? Le cite-t-il par un intermédiaire qui nous est lui aussi inconnu ? On serait presque tenté de penser, étant donné la faible force du parallèle établi entre les deux auteurs rejetés, que Grégoire a lu ce texte ou cette citation au moment même où il composait *Contre Eunome* III 2 et l'a de ce fait introduit à un moment plus ou moins opportun, par rapprochement d'idée. Mais sans doute est-ce là s'avancer trop loin dans le domaine des hypothèses, au détriment des faits.

Conclusion : Eunome et Grégoire

Au terme de cette lecture, qui a surtout été attentive aux liens qui unissent la réflexion de Grégoire à celle d'Eunome et aux déformations que l'évêque de Nysse fait subir à la pensée de son adversaire, on peut en résumer ainsi les acquis principaux : la réponse nysséenne se construit pour l'essentiel en

85 Pour le Fils, voir Athanase d'Alexandrie, *De decr.* 25,2 (AW 2.1 20,33-21,8) ; pour l'Esprit, id., *EpSerap* IV 4 (AW 1.4 583,1-18).

86 Il faut plutôt y voir, comme le suggère A. von Harnack, un modèle intelligible de la création : A. von Harnack, *Die Hypotyposen* . . ., 87.

87 Ce qui ne saurait étonner dans le *Contre Eunome* ; voir l'analyse des autres filiations hérétiques proposées dans ce traité, dans M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse* . . ., 96-99.

réaction à une construction qu'il élabore lui-même à partir de fragments eunomiens plutôt qu'à partir des positions d'Eunome lui-même. Si une telle démarche ne remet pas en cause la validité de la théologie nysséenne, elle conduit cependant à prendre avec beaucoup de précautions les éléments qui sont présentés par Grégoire comme des conclusions ou des aboutissements de la logique d'Eunome. D'autre part, on remarque la place importante accordée dans ce tome à l'explication de l'Écriture, y compris lorsque cette explication ne constitue pas une réponse directe aux développements eunomiens, moins encore à une exégèse eunomienne. On mesure ainsi la liberté assez grande que s'accorde l'auteur – du moins dans les deux premiers tomes du livre III – par rapport à ce que pourrait laisser attendre la stricte réfutation des thèses et surtout du texte de son adversaire. Au vu du reste du livre III, en effet, les tomes 1 et 2 semblent témoigner d'une relative originalité. Ils paraissent en effet être caractérisés par une absence d'adéquation stricte entre le fil du raisonnement eunomien, tel qu'on peut le reconstituer, et le texte nysséen ; on comprendrait peut-être mieux cet écart si, comme il a été suggéré plus haut, les deux premiers tomes correspondent plus ou moins à une section liminaire du troisième livre de l'*Apologie de l'apologie*. Si une telle explication n'est pas valable, ou s'avère insuffisante, on pourra retenir en sens inverse que le relatif désordre qui paraît caractériser les rapports entre *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire, *Apologie de l'apologie* d'Eunome et *Contre Eunome* de Basile pourrait trouver son explication dans la manière même de procéder de l'évêque de Nysse en ces deux premiers tomes : la liberté prise avec le fil du texte eunomien et de la pensée adverse expliquerait, au moins partiellement, la difficulté que nous avons à reconstituer avec certitude les rapports qui unissent entre eux ces trois textes.

Au plan du strict contenu nysséen de ce tome, enfin, on retiendra tout d'abord l'importance des deux lieux exégétiques principaux, consacrés respectivement au prologue johannique et au titre de Premier-né, sur lesquels nous sommes revenus rapidement, dans la mesure où l'étude en a déjà été proposée ailleurs[88]. On rappellera également que la thématique de l'engendrement sans passion du Fils trouve ici l'un de ses lieux de développement essentiel et est explicitement relié à l'enfantement virginal et sans passion de Marie. Ce tome reflète également, quoique de manière détournée, l'importance de la distinction nysséenne entre incréé et créé – qui n'est pas vraiment distinguée, sous cet aspect, de la césure plus traditionnelle entre sensible et intelligible – à travers l'opposition irréductible qui est tracée par Grégoire entre le discours sur la nature (φυσιολογία), c'est-à-dire sur la nature créée et matérielle, et la contemplation des mystères incréés et intelligibles. Enfin, même si la question

88 *Ibid.*, 275-317, 319-356.

n'a pas été reprise directement dans ces pages, on trouve ici comme partout ailleurs dans le *Contre Eunome* des traces explicites et volontaires du haut degré d'éducation de l'auteur, mais aussi de sa conscience littéraire propre : la longue comparaison des disciples d'Eunome avec les compagnons d'Ulysse que séduit Circé[89] en constitue ici le paradigme, mais la citation érudite de Théognoste d'Alexandrie en fournit, à un autre titre, un témoignage.

89 Sur ce développement et les pages qui l'entourent, voir l'analyse proposée *ibid.*, 136-148.

Contra Eunomium III 3

Andrew Radde-Gallwitz

This paper aims to place the argument of Gregory's *Contra Eunomium* III 3 into historical perspective. This text teaches us a great deal about the quite different approaches taken by Eunomius and Gregory to the mystery of Christ and the salvation he brings. To begin with a provisional description, for Eunomius, salvation requires that the "one Lord" through whom all things were created be identified in every respect with Jesus, whereas for Gregory, salvation is the story of "union of the man with the divine" in Christ (ἕνωσιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸ θεῖον) (III 3,69).[1] That this is a *story*, I hope to underscore.

Gregory's Christology is notoriously complicated; he has appeared to more than one commentator to move from highly "divisive" or "dualistic" passages to "monophysite" passages without comment on how it all holds together.[2] However, at least from the perspective of *CE* III 3, what we see in Gregory is not outright contradiction but rather an intertwining of diverse strands, some of which Gregory has inherited from his sources.[3]

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1 Unless differences are noted, I have followed the translation by Stuart G. Hall. For the importance of the language of "union", see J.-R. Bouchet, "Le Vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse", *Revue Thomiste* 68 (1968) 533–582, at 534–38.

2 E.g., A. S. J. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition, Vol. 1: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. J. S. Bowden, London 1965, 282–290. See the nuanced response to Joseph Tixeront in Brian Daley, "Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa's Anti-Apollinarian Christology", *Modern Theology* 18 (2002) 497–506. A helpful overview of modern reception of Gregory's Christology is provided by Morwenna Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa: Ancient and (Post)Modern*, Oxford 2007, 97–107.

3 The complexity of Gregory's Christology can be illustrated by noting that, in the *Eranistes* dialogue of Theodoret, written around AD 447, Gregory seems to have influenced both the Orthodox speaker—*CE* III 3 and other texts are cited in the patristic florilegium supporting his account—and the "Eutychian" speaker Eranistes, especially in the latter's argument that, after the passion, the humanity of Christ is through mixture made Lord. For Eransites advocating this view, see *Eranistes* 2 (ed. G. H. Ettlinger, Oxford 1975, 146–151). He changes his position from his earlier statement that this occurs at the incarnation; though see already *Eranistes* 2 (Ettlinger 128). For Theodoret's citation of *CE* III 3,43–44, see *Eranistes* 2 (Ettlinger 170). In the citation, Theodoret omits a more "monophysite" clause: "by that combination [the 'right hand of God'] making him also what by nature it is itself". *CE* III 3 is also cited in the Florilegia to books 1 (III 3,64; Ettlinger 106) and 3 (III 3,65; Ettlinger 241).

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The labels "divisive" and "dualistic" have been used to describe Basil's and Gregory's Christology. This interpretation began with Eunomius. For Eunomius, Basil's distinction of theology and economy implies a certain embarrassment on Basil's part regarding the kenosis and suffering of Christ as well as an actual division of two Christs. But not all distinctions are separations or divisions. As we will see, Gregory's Christology is clearly not "divisive", and I will suggest that a better label for it is "dual-focus" Christology, with some passages referring to the Word in his fleshly, human state and others referring to him with God from before the ages. Yet, as we shall see, this "dual-focus" obtains only before Christ's resurrection and glorification, after which it is inappropriate to distinguish Christ's humanity from his divinity.[4]

CE III 3 is devoted to the interpretation of Peter's words in *Acts* 2,36—"God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified".[5] While Gregory is ostensibly merely defending Basil's understanding of the passage, he at the same time adds significant new elements to it. Some of what he adds can be accounted for by placing Gregory into a broader anti-Homoian and anti-Eunomian tradition that had emerged alongside Basil in the roughly two decades from the late 350's to the death of Basil.

This study will proceed in four stages. First, I offer an overview of Eunomius' Christology in the fragment preserved by Gregory in III 3, and summarize his charges against Basil. Then I will discuss at some length the interpretation of *Act*s 2,36 in anti-Eunomian tradition prior to Gregory. Third, I will turn briefly to Gregory's Christology in works roughly contemporaneous with *CE* III. Finally, I will comment upon *CE* III 3 itself.

1 Eunomius' Charges Against Basil

In III 3, Gregory preserves a lengthy fragment of Eunomius' *Apologia Apologiae*, running to 133 lines in the GNO edition. In the fragment, Eunomius also lodges

4 An important study of *CE* III 3 which rightly emphasizes the paschal transformation of Christ's humanity can be found in B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, esp. 241–56. As will be evident, there are problems with Pottier's claim that in *CE* III 3, "mixture" does not mean the "absorption" of the risen human in Christ into the divine. In particular, it is striking that Pottier can cite no passage in *CE* III 3 to justify his reading. His strongest evidence is Basil, *Ep*. 261,3!

5 For an overview of the argument of *CE* III 3, see Anthony Meredith, "Contra Eunomium 3,3", in: *Jesus Christ in St. Gregory of Nyssa's Theology. Minutes of the 9th International Conference on St. Gregory of Nyssa* (*Athens, 7–12 September 2000*), Athens 2005, 165–171.

a series of accusations against Basil which Gregory begins to refute here. His response to these charges will extend until the opening section of III 5. Clarifying Eunomius' argument will be important to understanding Gregory's response.

Taken in the order and wording with which Gregory recapitulates them, Eunomius' charges are:

1. Basil is ashamed of the cross. (Addressed by Gregory in III 3,30–40a).[6]
2. Basil insults the saints. (Addressed in III 3,40b–46).
3. Basil says a man emptied himself into becoming man. (Addressed in III 3,47–56a).
4. Basil thinks that before his presence in the flesh the Lord has the form of a slave. (Addressed together with charge #3).
5. Basil ascribes the redemption to a man. (Addressed in 3.4.1–23).
6. Basil speaks of two Christs and Lords, or if not that, he says that before his passion, the Only-begotten was not Christ and Lord. (Addressed in III 3,56b–66).

With the "two Christs and Lords" barb, Eunomius follows venerable tradition going back to Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*.[7] This accusation captures the core of Eunomius' irritation with the passage he reproduces from Basil's second book *Against Eunomius*.[8] There, Basil said *Acts* 2,36 is not about "the very substance of God the Word, who *was in the beginning with God* (*Jn* 1,2), but about the one who *emptied himself in the form of a slave* (*Phil* 2,7), became *similar in form to the body of our lowliness* (Phil 3.21), and *was crucified through weakness* (2 Cor 13.4)".[9] Over against Basil's two Christs, Eunomius articulates a strikingly "unitive" Christology: "... [Y]et for us there is one Lord and Christ through whom all things were made (cf. *1 Cor* 8,6; *Jn* 1,3), who did not become Lord by advancement, but before all creation and before all ages existed as Lord Jesus, by whom are all things" (III 3,23). He notes that in *Philippians* 2, Paul calls the one who

6 Gregory's response includes an interesting meditation on the shape of the cross which occurs also in *Trid. spat.* (GNO IX 299,12–303,12) and the *Or. cat.* (GNO III/IV 80,18–81,1). This is based on an old tradition: see Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 60 and esp. Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 34.

7 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III 16,1–19,3.

8 Eunomius appears to have employed, with some changes, Basil's method of verbatim quotation and refutation which Gregory also uses in his *CE*. For comment, see Matthieu Cassin's contribution in the present volume.

9 Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* 2,3.

was "in the form of God" "Christ Jesus" and calls the crucified one the "Lord of glory" (III 3,24). Clearly, with these passages, we are far removed from the Eunomius described by Harnack as "openly proclaiming the conversion of religion into morality and syllogistic reasoning".[10]

Basil's "two Christs and Lords" are the Word who was in the beginning and "the visible one" (III 3,18). According to Eunomius, if all the economic passages, including especially those which are about the suffering of Christ for all humanity, are ascribed only to the visible one, then salvation is attributed to a mere man (III 3,18). This is not only irreligious. It also makes nonsense of *Philippians* 2,6–7, for it would have a man emptying himself to become a man (III 3,18–20). Basil's doctrine, on his reading, inevitably leads to two Christs and Lords—the one Word through whom all things were made, and Jesus who was crucified (III 3,22).

Eunomius imagines a response: "If any one should defend him by saying that the Word in the beginning and made Lord are the same, but that it was in terms of his presence in the flesh that he was made Lord and Christ, he will surely be obliged to say that before his presence in the flesh the Son was not Lord" (III 3,23). For Eunomius it is wrongheaded to speak of Christ advancing to his lordly status. Rather it is the same Lord Jesus through the world was created who emptied himself and became flesh.

But what is Eunomius saying here about *Acts* 2,36? That verse speaks of Jesus being made Lord, which runs in the opposite direction of a kenosis. According to Gregory, Eunomius is arguing that "what the apostle [Peter] meant by the word 'made', is the begetting of the Son before the ages" (III 3,12). Peter was referring to the initial creation of the Son. This is certainly the impression given in the *Apology*, where *Acts* 2,36 is directly linked with *Proverbs* 8,22 to prove that Christ was "made".[11] If Gregory's reading of Eunomius is correct, then for Eunomius *Acts* 2,36 had nothing to do with the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth. For Eunomius, if you place the "making" during Jesus' lifetime, you have two Christs and Lords.

Eunomius' goal, according to Gregory, is to alienate the Son's nature from the Father's, or perhaps to show that the Son's suffering is evidence of his inferior nature. Whereas the Father is impassible, the Son "is not unable to enter into the experience of flesh and death, since the change is not great" (III 3,38). These, it must be noted, are Gregory's words. For Gregory, it is Eunomius rather than Basil who posits no kenosis, since the Son is by nature fit for embodiment,

10 Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. from the 3rd German edition by Neil Buchanan, New York 1961, vol. 4, 74.

11 *Apology* [*Apol.*] 26,12–16 (Vaggione 70).

suffering, and death. If Gregory's account is accurate, Eunomius has shifted his perspective from the *Apology*, where he calls Lord Jesus, the Only-begotten God, "immortal and deathless".[12] Whether or not Eunomius changed his mind and taught a passible Son, it is obvious that he set himself against all "dual-focus" exegesis.

Eunomius' accusation that Basil teaches "two Christs and Lords" reflects his deepest worry. However, in his summary of Eunomius' accusations, Gregory rephrases it: "or if not that, [Basil] says that before his passion, the Only-begotten was not Christ and Lord" (III 3,26). The passage from Eunomius contains no such accusation. Perhaps Gregory is referring to a portion of the *Apologia Apologiae* which he does not reproduce. However, this is unlikely, since Basil himself did not discuss the passion at any length in connection with *Acts* 2,36 and certainly does not discuss the glorification of Christ after the passion.[13] I want to suggest that Gregory is surreptitiously raising a theme he wishes to dwell on in his response, namely, the transformation of the human united to Christ after his passion. "After the passion" is a phrase which occurs five times in *CE* III 3.[14] Gregory makes it central to his response to Eunomius. Gregory was not acting without precedent in diverting the discussion to this theme. While Basil did not make this move, Gregory is standing in the line of the anti-Eunomian tradition, insofar as we can reconstruct it, which had emerged after Basil's *Against Eunomius*.

2 *Acts* 2,36 in Anti-Eunomian Tradition: Dual-Focus Exegesis and the Resurrection

This becomes clear if we examine the interpretation of *Acts* 2,36 in the fourth century prior to Gregory, with special emphasis on anti-Homoian and anti-Eunomian literature. In particular, I will focus on three works: Pseudo-Athanasius, *De Incarnatione et Contra Arianos*,[15] Pseudo-Basil, *Adversus*

12 *Apol.* 21, 16–17 (Vaggione 60).

13 The difference between Basil's and Gregory's exegeses of *Acts* 2,36 is striking. Basil insisted that the demonstrative pronoun in "this Jesus" (τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν) shows that Peter's reference was to "[Christ's] humanity and to what all saw" (Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* 2,3). In contrast, Gregory argues that after the "making" which Peter describes, Christ is invisible (Greg. Nyss., *CE* III 3,44–46).

14 *CE* III 3,33.43.60 (3 times), and 67.

15 In subsequent notes abbreviated as *DICA*. No critical edition of the Greek exists. The Greek text used is that printed in Patrologia Graeca (PG) 26 984–1028.

Eunomium IV–V,[16] and Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.[17] Pseudo-Athanasius argues against an "Anhomoian" theology and Pseudo-Basil attacks a position that is recognizably Eunomian. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69 is directed against Eudoxius and his followers. This is a group with which he knows Eunomius was originally associated. Many of the proof texts he addresses as Eudoxian are the same as those addressed by Pseudo-Athanasius and Pseudo-Basil. Each of these works responds to an exegesis of *Acts* 2,36 that we might label "radical homoian" or "Eunomian". Since Hübner, scholars have acknowledged Gregory's dependence upon the Pseudo-Athanasian work.[18] There has not been as much attention to the tradition of which this work was part, or of Gregory's use of the broader anti-Homoian/ anti-Eunomian tradition.

We know from Athanasius' *First and Second Orations Against the Arians*—written in AD 339–340—that *Acts* 2,36 was already appealed to by the party of Asterius and Eusebius (if we may think of them as a party), along with such important verses as *Proverbs* 8,22, in order to show that the Son of God is a "creature and a work" (ποίημα καὶ κτίσμα).[19] Like his exegesis of *Proverbs* 8,22, Athanasius' reading of *Acts* 2,36 relies heavily upon the principle he apparently learned from Marcellus of attributing such texts to the humanity or the body of the incarnate Word rather than to the deity of the pre-incarnate Word. This

16 There is no critical edition of the Greek. The Greek text used is the one edited by the Maurist fathers and reprinted by J.-P. Migne in PG 29 672–773; see also F. X. Risch, *Pseudo-Basilius: Adversus Eunomium IV–V: Einleitung, Übersetzung, und Kommentar*, SVigChr 16, Leiden 1992.

17 Ed. Holl, Dümmer (GCS), 152–229; F. Williams (tr.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Books II and II* (*Sects 47–80,* De fide), Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 36, Leiden 1994, 325–402.

18 R. M. Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Philosophia Patrum 2, Leiden 1974, esp. 29–33, 53–54, 269 ff. Hübner followed Martin Tetz in assigning this work to Marcellus: "Zur Theologie des Markell von Ankyra I. Eine markellische Schrift, 'De incarnatione et contra Arianos'", *ZKG* 75 (1964) 217–270. This attribution has been decisively refuted by A. Heron, "The Pseudo-Athanasian Works *De Trinitate et Spirtu Sancto* and *De Incarnatione et Contra Arianos*: A Comparison", in: Th. Aksum (ed.), *A Festschrift for Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira and Great Britain*, London 1985, 281–298. Here and elsewhere, Heron has shown connections between the *DICA* and works by—or at least influenced by—Didymus the Blind. Johannes Zachhuber connects its theology with Apollinarius, but does not attribute it to him: *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance,* SVigChr 46, Leiden, Boston, Köln 2000, 139.

19 *Orations Against the Arians* [*Or.*] 1,53; 2,1; 2,11–18. Quotation comes from *Or.* 2,1 (PG 26 48A).

"dual-focus" exegesis would become a fixture of anti-"Arian" and anti-Eunomian interpretation.

But between 340 and 360, we find little reference to *Acts* 2,36.[20] It appears to have become hot again with the rise of the Homoians in 357–360.[21] As noted earlier, it is cited along with *Proverbs* 8,22 in Eunomius' *Apology*, written in 360.[22] From the broader anti-Homoian literature, we can see that for the radical Homoians, *Acts* 2,36 was not an isolated proof, but one of many important passages.[23] Gregory deals with many of these in *Contra Eunomium* III. We can reconstruct the radical Homoian exegesis from the three anti-Eunomian texts mentioned above.

Epiphanius, Pseudo-Athanasius, and Pseudo-Basil all take up the Homoian/Eunomian proof-texts and respond in strikingly similar ways. All of them distinguish between those passages which ought to be attributed to the divine Word and those which ought to be taken as references to Christ's humanity. Sometimes this "dual-focus" Christology is explicated through a Word-flesh distinction, other times through a Word-man distinction. It has its roots in Athanasius' *Orations Against the Arians*. But in the 360's and 370's, it became the standard coin of anti-Eunomian literature. So, it should not surprise us that it informs Gregory of Nyssa's reading of *Acts* 2,36.

At this point a clarification might be useful. In the fifth century, Cyril and Nestorius famously argued about Christological exegesis. In that debate, it is Nestorius and his followers—the "Antiochenes"—whom we think of as promoting a "dual-focus" or "dualistic" Christology. In contrast, the Christology of Cyril is "unitive", insisting on a single subject for all passages about the divine Word. However, it is important not to read this debate anachronistically back into the debate between Eunomians and anti-Eunomians. Both Nestorius and Cyril were anti-Eunomians. More importantly, in the sense that is relevant to us today, even Cyril's Christological exegesis was dual-focus. While Cyril maintained that all passages regarding Jesus were about the Word, he nonetheless distinguished between what is said about the Word as such and what is said about the incarnate Word. So, we must not read Eunomius as Cyril or

20 It is not noted in the Creeds of the 340's and 350's, and it is not discussed in important works like Athanasius' *De decretis* and *De synodis*, Basil of Ancyra or George of Laodicea's letters, or Hilary's *De synodis* or *De trinitate*.

21 In addition to the texts discussed here, see Marius Victorinus, *First Letter of Candidus* 11 and *Letter to Candidus* 29–30, written ca. AD 359.

22 Eunomius, *Apol.* 26,12–16 (Vaggione 70).

23 These included, in addition to *Prov* 8,22, *Mk* 10,18; 13,32; *Lk* 2,52; *Jn* 5,26; 14,28; 17,3; 20,17; *1 Cor* 15,24–28; *Gal* 1,1 (and similar passages); *Phil* 2,9.

Alexandria and the anti-Eunomians as Nestorius or Antioch. For Cyril, as for the fourth-century anti-Eunomians, the Son does *not* suffer in himself, but only in his incarnate nature. For Eunomius, the Son *does* suffer *in his own nature*. Also, like his anti-Eunomian sources, Gregory alternates freely between a Word-man and a Word-flesh vocabulary. Neither he nor his sources can be called "Antiochene" or "Alexandrian" in the 5th-century sense.

The issue in the Homoian/Eunomian dossier and in the anti-Eunomian treatises was not merely suffering, but any kind of growth and becoming on Christ's part. For the Eunomians, these were signs of Christ's inferior divinity. For anti-Eunomians, they were signs of his humanity. Also at issue was any passage that speaks of Christ receiving anything from the Father.[24] Hence, the importance of *Acts* 2,36 where Jesus is *made* Christ and Lord. Pseudo-Basil's interpretation is similar to Basil's in *Adversus Eunomium* II 3.[25] For Pseudo-Basil, *Acts* 2,36 is about "the one who is said to be from Mary *according to the flesh*" and not "the one who is before the ages". While the author likely does not intend this, his phrasing, like Basil's own, can leave the impression that these are two distinct subjects. However, he argues that "God" and "human" are not "two" but "one" in Christ, even though their natures are conceptually distinct (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν τὴν ἑκάστου φύσιν λογίζομενοι).[26]

While Pseudo-Basil does not make clear *when* God made the one from Mary according to the flesh Lord and Christ, other anti-Eunomian texts place it at the resurrection. The resurrection was clearly a subject of some dispute in the debate with the radical Homoians or Eunomians, who used passages like *Galatians* 1,1 ("God raised him from the dead") to argue that Jesus' divinity is lesser than God's. After all, this shows that Jesus "needed" God to raise him.[27] The anti-Eunomians gave a different construal of the resurrection.

One important move made by these authors was to argue that it was the Word which raised the man Jesus. Christ's divinity, in other words, was the agent that raised his humanity. Another strategy was to discuss the transformation effected in the resurrection in much the way Gregory does. In the course of interpreting *Acts* 2,36, Pseudo-Athanasius says:

> And when Peter says . . . [Acts 2,36] . . ., he is not speaking about his divinity, but about his humanity, that is, the whole church, which rules and reigns in him after he was crucified. And it is anointed into the kingdom of heaven, so that it might reign along with him who emptied himself for

24 Cf. Ps.-Athanasius, *DICA* (PG 26 1004B).

25 Ps.-Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* IV (PG 29 704C–705A).

26 Ps.-Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* IV (PG 29 704C). Cf. Gregory, *CE.* III 3,63.

27 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69,19,4–8 and 69,59,1–10; cf. Ps.-Athanasius, *DICA* (PG 26 985C).

> its sake and who assumed it through the form of a slave. For the Word and Son of God was always Lord and God, and was not made Lord and Christ after he was crucified. Rather, as I have said, his divinity made his humanity Lord and Christ.[28]

Gregory will revise this in a few ways.[29] However, much of Gregory's response to Eunomius in *CE* III 3 is here in Pseudo-Athanasius: Peter is speaking about Christ's humanity rather than his divinity; Christ's humanity is glossed with *form of a slave* from *Philippians* 2,7; Christ's humanity is made to be Lord and Christ, that is, it is made what Christ is by nature from eternity; this transformation happens "after he was crucified"; and, finally, the Son's divinity is the agent of the humanity's resurrection.

Similar themes appear in Epiphanius' account of *Acts* 2,36. It is the flesh which is crucified, and hence the flesh and the human nature which is made Christ and Lord.[30] Particularly striking is his claim that the Word's "human form is united and a single impassibility results, especially after his resurrection from the dead".[31] Here, the human nature takes on the divine impassibility as part of the transformation effected in the resurrection.[32] Pseudo-Athanasius and Epiphanius use *Acts* 2,36 to underscore the change made to Christ's human nature in his resurrection and glorification.[33]

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28 Ps.-Athanasius, *DICA* (PG 26 1021A–B).

29 For him, the Word is not only Lord and God from eternity, but also Christ, since he is eternally anointed by God with the Spirit (See esp. *Eust.* (GNO III/I 15–16)). Also, as Zachhuber has shown, Gregory does not speak in *CE* III 3 about "the whole Church", focusing instead on human nature: *Human Nature*, 140–141. Elsewhere, including in his exegesis of *Proverbs* 8,22 in *CE* III 1, Gregory does follow Pseudo-Athansius more closely in speaking of the Church rather than of human nature. Also, Gregory uses the language of "mixture" to describe the transformation of humanity in the risen Christ, a theme which does not appear in Pseudo-Athanasius.

30 *Panarion* 69,41.

31 *Panarion* 69,42,9: ἀλλὰ συνηνωμένη ἡ ἐνανθρώπησις αὐτοῦ εἰς μίαν ἀπάθειαν, μάλιστα μετὰ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν.

32 In what follows, he underscores the unity: "There is one Lord, one Christ, one King, seated at the Father's right hand, one union physical and spiritual, one spiritual Godhead, both body and spirit radiant and glorious" (*Panarion* 69,42,10).

33 Epiphanius does not restrict the glorification to the resurrection, however: see *Panarion* 69,80,1–2 (on the Transfiguration) and 69,79,4 (on *John* 5,22–23). A similar emphasis on the difference between Christ's humanity before and after the passion can be found in Amphilochius of Iconium, another staunch anti-Eunomian. After all, Amphilochius reasons, Christ can enter through locked doors after his resurrection. See Amphilochius, fr. 6 (Datema) on *John* 5,19, one of Eunomius' favorite proofs: see *Apol.* 20,21; 26,22–23; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69,78,1.

So we find two important themes in the anti-Eunomian literature. First, there is a widespread "dual-focus" Christology. This provides a hermeneutical key by which one divides passages which speak of Christ *qua* divine from those which speak of him *qua* human or *qua* flesh. This "dual-focus" approach is so ubiquitous in this tradition, and so often woodenly applied, that we must view the anti-Eunomian background, and not Gregory's opposition to Apollinarius, as the explanation for what Grillmeier called Gregory's "diphysite" tendencies.[34] We must be clear, however, in our description of this tradition, lest we represent it as more dualistic than it was. The distinction envisaged in the "dual-focus" approach does not imply a separation or division into two Christs. Pseudo-Basil already responded to such an objection. And as he made clear, the division of natures in Christ is a merely conceptual difference. The second major theme from the anti-Eunomian tradition is that, at the resurrection, a more strikingly unitive picture emerges, as Christ's humanity is made into what Christ *qua* divine is eternally. I suggest that when we hear Gregory repeatedly invoking the phrase "after the passion" in *CE* III 3 (and elsewhere), we ought to think of this literature as background against which to read him. Where Gregory advances on this tradition is his use of the language of "mixture" to describe the union of humanity and divinity after the passion, a language which makes his approach even more unitive than the anti-Eunomians surveyed here.

3 Christology and Soteriology: In illud: Tunc et ipse filius, Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium, and Ad Theophilum adversus Apolinaristas

We can offer our final bit of context for *CE* III 3 by glancing briefly at the *In illud* and the *Antirrheticus*, two works roughly contemporaneous with *CE* III 3, and *Ad Theophilum*, a work from a few years later which nonetheless contains an interestingly parallel interpretation of *Acts* 2,36. *In illud* of course deals with *1 Corinthians* 15,28, which was a Eunomian proof text. In the course of recovering what he takes to be an orthodox reading of that verse, Gregory offers an exegesis of another Eunomian favorite, *John* 17,5,[35] where Jesus prays, "Glorify

34 Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 283.

35 It is cited as a Eunomian proof in Eunomius, *Expositio Fidei* 3,14 and Pseudo-Basil, *Against Eunomius* IV (PG 29 701A–B). Cf. Ps-Athanasius, *DICA* (PG 26 992B), where it is cited, but not explicitly identified as a Eunomian text.

me with the glory which I had from the beginning from you before the world existed". Identifying this glory with the Holy Spirit, Gregory writes:

> God the Word had the glory of the Father before the world, and then in the last days became flesh. But it was necessary that the flesh too become, through mixing (ἀνακράσεως) with the Word, what the Word is. It becomes this by receiving what the Word had before the world, which is the Holy Spirit.[36]

We see here the approach of the anti-Eunomian literature, coupled with two points which are characteristic of Nyssen: the identification of the Spirit with the glory of God[37] and the language of "mixture" for the union of flesh with the divine Word. In context, it appears he is thinking of this mingling and glorification as occurring at or after the resurrection.

This is explicit in the *Antirrheticus*. Gregory responds to Apollinarius' charge that he does not call the Son "Christ" from the beginning, a charge that is linked with an accusation of teaching two Christs and two Lords. Gregory says he does not think of a fleshly Christ as existing from eternity. "Rather, we acknowledge the same one who is before the ages and Lord, and again after the passion we confess this same one, just as Peter says to the Jews . . . [*Acts* 2,36]". This is not a dualistic Christology in any unqualified sense, and it is surely not "divisive". Later, he expands:

> The Word is Christ and Lord, and this is what the one who was mixed with and assumed into the Godhead becomes. For the one who is Lord is not re-fashioned as Lord; rather, the form of the slave becomes Lord. Also, for this reason, Christ, who is clothed before the ages with the glory of the Spirit (for this is what anointing symbolizes), is called One Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things exist (1 Cor 8,6). And after the passion, by adorning the man whom he united with himself with the same chrism, he makes him Christ. For he says, Glorify me, that is to say, 'anoint me with the glory, which I had from you before the world began (Jn 17,5). And the glory which is understood to be before the world, before the entire creation, and before all ages, by which the Only-begotten God is glorified,

36 Greg. Nyss., *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III/II 22,7–12).

37 On which see A. Radde-Gallwitz, "Gregory of Nyssa's Pneumatology in Context: The Spirit as Anointing and the History of the Trinitarian Controversies", *JECS* 19 (2011), 197–223.

> is in our view (κατὰ τὸν ἡμέτερον λόγον) nothing other than the glory of the Spirit.[38]

In the *Ad Theophilum*, written in 385 at the earliest, Gregory answers the charge of teaching two Sons. His response invokes the language of mixing and a dual-focus approach. On one hand, the one who is always with the Father does not change. However, "when the assumed first-fruits of human nature has been blended (κατακραθεῖσα) by the all-powerful divinity like a drop of vinegar in the infinite ocean, as one might say with the use of illustration, it is in the divinity and not, surely, in its very own characteristics".[39] He proceeds to cite *Acts* 2,36 in justification of a strict notion of unity whereby "the human is titled divine and the divine human", and the "Lord of glory" is named "Jesus".[40]

4 Gregory's Christology in *CE* III 3

And so, at long last we return to Gregory's Christology in *CE* III 3. The Christology of this work is in important respects the same as we have seen in the anti-Eunomian literature. There is a clear "dual-focus" approach, underscored at the beginning with Gregory's *theôria tôn ontôn*, where he speaks about the difference between Creator and creation. Yet, Gregory stresses the unity of the subject Jesus Christ, and I hope to spend the rest of my time asking what sense of unity he has in mind and what this implies for Christ's human nature. As its weakest sense of unity, Gregory advocates a form of *communicatio idiomatum*: Although "the beatings belong to the slave in whom the Master is, and the honours to the Master enclosed in the slave", yet,

> . . . by the bond and conjunction both belong to each, as the Master takes to himself the bruises of the slave, and the slave is glorified with the honour of the Master. That is why the crucifixion is attributed to the Lord of glory (1 Cor 2,8), and every tongue confesses that 'Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2,10) (III 3,66).[41]

So, we clearly cannot think of separable subjects, the human Jesus and the divine Word. Gregory once says that, despite the distinction, what happens to

38 Greg. Nyss., *Antirrh.* (GNO III/I 222).

39 *Theoph.* (GNO II/I 126,17–21).

40 Ibid. (GNO III/I 127,18–128,3); *Acts* 2,36 is cited at GNO III/I 127,14.

41 Cf. *Theoph.* (GNO III/I 127,19–128,9).

Christ happens "to a single person" (περὶ ἕν πρόσωπον) (III 3,42). After the passion, the unity is fully realized.

This is a salvation of the human nature which the Word united to himself:

> Our own position is that the Only-begotten God having by himself brought the universe into being, has total control of the universe in himself, and one of the things made by him was human nature,[42] and when this lapsed into evil, and for this reason came into the destruction of death, by himself he brought it back to immortal life, through the man in whom he made his dwelling, assuming to himself all that is human (ὅλον . . . τὸ ἀνθρώπινον);[43] and that he mingled his own life-giving power with the mortal and perishable nature, and by combination with himself transformed our deadly state into lively grace and power (III 3,51).

As in the anti-Eunomian literature surveyed earlier, the Only-begotten God is the agent of the resurrection here, a point Gregory argues throughout *CE* III 3.[44] Much attention has been paid to what "human nature" means here. Gregory uses the phrase three times in *CE* III 3 (III 3,51, III 3,65, III 3,67). A few features of Gregory' usage are worth noting. First, Gregory uses the phrase principally in its intensive sense as bearer of properties such as mortality and corporeality, and only secondarily in its extensive sense as a universal.[45] He is most interested, in other words, in what humanity *means*, its proper characteristics or *idiômata*. Second, "human nature" is synonymous with "flesh" in this treatise, as in the anti-Eunomian tradition. Third, the focus throughout is solely upon the human nature *of Christ*; hence Gregory can alternate between speaking of Christ's "flesh", "body", "human nature", or even "the man" in much the same way as the anti-Eunomian authors cited above do.[46] Human nature is clearly not a "Platonist" ideal form.[47] As Zachhuber has noted, its defining characteristics can change and in fact have changed, first in the fall and again

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42 Hall: "the human race".

43 Zachhuber: "the whole human item": *Human Nature*, 126.

44 Gregory interprets the phrase "exalted by the right hand of God" (*Acts* 2,33) as a reference to action of the Word (the Right Hand) in raising Christ's humanity or flesh: III 3,43–44. This is somewhat different from some of Gregory's other contemporary writings, in which it is the Spirit which anoints Christ's flesh.

45 Contra Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 126 and 214–15.

46 In contrast with his three uses of "human nature", Gregory uses "flesh" 23 times in *CE* III 3.

47 Contra W. Herrmann, Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack, who were already criticized by K. Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den grossen Kappadoziern*, Tübingen, Leipzig 1904, 222–225.

in Christ.[48] Gregory envisions a transformation in Christ of human nature—meaning the *properties* of human nature—into divinity. It is above all with the metaphor of mixture that Gregory articulates this more "monophysite" aspect of his Christology. Since at least the fifth century, this language has been found disturbing. Lionel Wickham put it nicely at the 4th International Gregory of Nyssa Colloquium: the history of subsequent Christology just is "a critique of the metaphor".[49]

But we must judge Gregory by the standards of his own day. In *CE* III 3, Gregory transforms philosophical discussions of mixture—and perhaps Origen's discussion of the same—to suit his purposes. Gregory's concept of mixture has surface similarities with the infamous Stoic doctrine of *krasis di' holou*. For the Stoics, a small drop of wine can blend thoroughly with a large quantity of water in such a way that there is more than mere juxtaposition of two substances. Gregory similarly speaks of a drop of vinegar in the ocean. And yet, Gregory differs from the Stoics. He expressly denies three aspects of "blending through and through": (1) that the properties of both blended substances are changed in the mixture; (2) that both blended substances retain their substantial identity; and so, accordingly, (3) that each blended substance can be separated again.[50] Clearly, none of these statements is true of the mixture of Christ's divinity and humanity after the passion. Gregory uses the example of a drop of vinegar in the ocean for what we must label absorption rather than a mutual blending.[51] In this respect, as J.-R. Bouchet noted in 1968, he is much closer to Aristotle's account of small quantities of wine in large quantities of water.[52] According to Aristotle, in such cases, the wine will be transformed into the dominant element, water (μεταβάλλει γὰρ θάτερον εἰς τὸ κρατοῦν). Compare Gregory:

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48 Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa*, 127–28.

49 L. R. Wickham, "Soul and Body: Christ's Omnipotence (*De Tridui Spatio* 290,18–294,13)", in: A. Spira – Ch. Klock (eds.), *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa: Translation and Commentary. Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa, Cambridge, England, 11–15 September, 1978*, PMS 9, Cambridge (MA) 1981, 279–292 at 287.

50 See esp. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* 216.14–218.6 (= SVF 2.473).

51 Despite the protests of Grillmeier (*Christ in Christian Tradition,* 289), Pottier (*Dieu et le Christ*, 242), and Daley ("Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation", 501–502).

52 *De Generatione et Corruptione* 328a26–28. Bouchet, "Le Vocabulaire de l'union", 554–556 (for Aristotle), 562–563 (for Gregory, *CE* III 3). Ludlow surveys recent studies of Gregory's sources for his mixture language at *Gregory of Nyssa*, 98–100. She helpfully shows that Gregory's doctrine is neither purely Stoic nor purely Aristotelian.

> [T]he man also he [i.e. the right hand of God=the Word] made to be these things. Just as in the Most High he became highly exalted, so too he became all the other things, in the Immortal, immortal, in the Light, light, in the Indestructible, indestructible, in the Invisible, invisible [nota bene!], in the Christ, Christ, and in the Lord, Lord. It happens also where physical things are combined (ἐπὶ τῶν σωματικῶν ἀνακράσεων), when one part is greatly superior in quantity to the other, that the lesser is, naturally, entirely converted into the predominant[53] (πρὸς τὸ ἐπικρατοῦν πάντως μεταποιεῖσθαι τὸ ἐλαττούμενον)... [The flesh] however because of its commingling with the Good in its immensity and infinity (διὰ τὴς πρὸς τὸ ἄπειρόν τε καὶ ἀόριστον τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀνακράσεως), no longer remained within its own limits and characteristics (ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις μέτροις καὶ ἰδιώμασιν), but was taken and lifted up by the right hand of God and became, instead of a slave, Lord, instead of a subject, Christ the King, instead of lowly, most high, instead of man, God (III 3,44–46).

He uses similar language again at the end of III 3:

> ... [B]y mingling with the divine (τῇ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀνακράσει), the mortal nature is renewed to match the dominant element (κατὰ τὸ ἐπικρατοῦν ἀναποιηθείσαν), and shares the power of the deity, as if one might say that the drop of vinegar mingled with the ocean is made into the sea by the mixing (ἡ μίξις), because the natural quality (τὴν κατὰ φύσιν ποιότητα) of this liquid no longer remains in the infinity of the dominant element (ἐν τῇ ἀπειρίᾳ τοῦ ἐπικρατούντος) (III 3,68).

Both Aristotle and Gregory emphasize the change of the inferior element into the dominant. Yet, Gregory distances himself from Aristotle also. On the latter's account, transformation into the dominant element is not, strictly speaking, mixture at all, but dissolution and change of form.[54] Also, when this happens, according to Aristotle, it results in an "increase to the dominant element" (αὔξησιν τοῦ κρατοῦντος).[55] The transformation of Christ's risen

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53 Hall trans. altered slightly.

54 *Gen. et corr.* 328a26–28.

55 *Gen. et corr.* 328a25–26. A fuller study is necessary to determine through what intermediate sources Gregory engaged this Aristotelian concept; of interest would be both pagan sources like Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixtione* and Plotinus, *Ennead* 2,7 and Christian sources such as Origen. See Bouchet, "Le Vocabulaire de l'union", who, in addition to

humanity is called mixture (μίξις and ἀνάκρασις) by Gregory, though he also uses μεταποιεῖσθαι and ἀναποιηθείσαν. But this is a strictly one-sided transformation, which of course does not entail a reciprocal change or an increase in God. Increase obviously does not make sense in the case of the infinite God. So, Gregory was clear about both the usefulness and the limitations of his metaphor of mixing. But where he does *not* qualify the metaphor of mixing—or rather *absorption* into the dominant element—is precisely in its "monophysite" implications. Christ's humanity perdures exactly as much as a drop of vinegar perdures in the ocean.[56] As Karl Holl saw, in order to avoid the charge of teaching two Christs, Gregory had to go to the extreme of positing "einer völligen Aufhebung der menschlichen Natur in die göttliche".[57]

Gregory's narrative of the mixture of humanity with divinity hinges on the passion. It is not of course that this mixture is without precedent in the life of Jesus. But before the passion, the divine power and life is hidden in the flesh. He offers two analogies for this. It is like a breath of air blown into water. Just as this breath will eventually rise (as a bubble) along with some water, "so, when after the passion the true Life contained in the flesh flows back up to its own true self, the flesh containing it is borne up with it, driven upwards from

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Aristotle, discusses Philo, the Neoplatonists, and medical sources. He also mentions the use of mixture language in Hippolytus, Origen, and Gregory of Nazianzus.

56 The passage just quoted from Gregory, which can be paralleled with others, provides a perspective on the issue of Gregory's theology of "deification" that has not been appreciated sufficiently in some of the literature on the topic. E.g. Norman Russell, after noting Gregory's Christological use of the language of mixture, does not refer to the passage from *CE* III 3, but rather says: "The language of deification would have sat easily with such a christology but Gregory uses it very sparingly". N. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford 2004, 230. Also, in his discussion of the vinegar analogy in a number of other passages, Russell apparently has no grounds for asserting that the drop of vinegar remains vinegar after being "absorbed" in the ocean (*Doctrine of Deification*, 229). We are told, commonly, that Gregory largely avoided the language of deification, and it is not hard to see why this judgment is made, especially when he is contrasted with Gregory Nazianzen for whom deification is explicit and central. Yet, Gregory is quite explicit on the topic here: Christ *qua* human became "instead of man, God". Once we get his concept of mixture clarified, it is clear that he was committed to a (perhaps disturbingly) strong notion of deification, yet one he believed to be entailed by the language of *Acts* 2,36—God *made him* both Lord and Christ. Still, it is *Christ's* humanity that is deified here. It is unclear how much of an account of general human deification we can draw from this.

57 Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium*, 228.

corruption to incorruption by the divine immortality" (III 3,67).[58] Again, it is like fire hidden from view in a wood-pile but which eventually flares up and, one presumes, makes that wood into fire. So too, the Lord of glory "conceal[ed] the tinder of life in the corporeal nature" but "by the dispensation of his death rekindled it and made it flare up by the power of his own godhead" and thus "made that also just what he himself was" (III 3,68).

We are left with a number of unresolved questions. With all this language about the transformation of human nature into divinity, what are we to make of Gregory's introductory "theory of existing things" (θεωρία τῶν ὄντων) (III 3,1–11, so named at III 3,12)? There, Gregory underscores the absolute division of Creator and creature. He says that "our idea[59] of existing things falls into two classes (διχῇ γὰρ διῃρημένης τῆς περὶ τῶν ὄντων ὑπολήψεως), the creation and the uncreated nature" (III 3,3). Christ's humanity, made into divinity, would seem to undermine this dichotomy.[60] But notice what Gregory says later in the treatise, directly after spelling out the mixture whereby Christ's flesh does not retain its own properties: "and yet the meaning (θεωρία) of the characteristics of the flesh and of the divinity remains unconfused, so long as each of these is considered (θεωρῆται) by itself" (III 3,63). There remains a conceptual differentiation—an unconfused θεωρία —even after the passion. Gregory proceeds to explicate this θεωρία (in III 3,64) and then to exegete a number of passages on Christ from a "dual-focus", but not divisive perspective (in III 3,65–66).[61] His account here is reminiscent of Pseudo-Basil's claim that the distinction of divine and human natures is purely conceptual.[62]

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58 The passage has been the subject of much discussion because of a theme which it does *not* contain, namely the unity of the Christ's divinity with both his soul and body separately between his death and resurrection. He develops this idea later in *Trid. spat.* (GNO IX 290–294) and other works. Jean Daniélou initially drew attention to this theme in these works. Lebourlier then used it to propose a relative chronology for the works *CE* III (Winter 381/2), *Trid. spat.* (Easter 382), *Ep.* 3 (Winter 382), *Antirrh.* (Winter 382/3), and *Ref.* (383): J. Lebourlier, "À propos l'état du Christ dans la mort", *RSPhTh* 46 (1962) 629–649 and 47 (1963) 161–180. For discussion, see Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi*, 135–36, n. 166; Wickham, "Soul and Body", 279–82; Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 204–7.

59 Hall, "ideas".

60 There are other instances in *CE* III of a dichotomous θεωρία or ὑπόληψις: see III 1,54; III 2,4.

61 The former section (the rehearsal of the θεωρία) is partially cited by Theodoret in the florilegium to *Eranistes* 1 (Ettlinger 106); the latter section (the "dual-focus" exegesis) is partially cited in the florilegium to *Eranistes* 3 (Ettlinger 241). Clearly, Theodoret selected the most "dualistic" parts of *CE* III 3 for citation. See note 3 above for discussion.

62 See p. 300 above.

As I have argued, "nature" in *CE* III 3 signifies the properties of nature. Yet we might ask whether the properties of human nature are adequately characterized here. It seems Gregory focuses precisely on the properties of *fallen* human nature—mortality, corruptibility, passion—just as the anti-Eunomian works[63] do, but not as Gregory does in other works. Elsewhere, human nature is characterized as "rational, risible, and receptive of knowledge".[64] If, in *CE* III 3, it is merely the marks of *fallen* humanity that are burned up and consumed in Christ, then does non-fallen human nature endure? If so, is there a possibility of non-monophysite reading of Gregory's risen Christ? And it seems that perhaps Gregory corrected himself in this direction in the *Oratio Catechetica*, where the divine fire burns off those features which are precisely labeled as "contrary to nature,"[65] whereas the incarnate Word shares in "all the characteristics" of our nature.[66] And generally, how does the account of deification in *CE* III 3 mesh with that given in works like *On the Soul and Resurrection*, where the soul becomes godlike through activities which imitate and mirror the divine characteristics?[67]

Also we might ask whether it is just to label Gregory's notion of salvation, as articulated in *CE* III 3, "physical".[68] This label has been used by Herrmann, Ritschl, Harnack, and others to label a view of salvation as "automatic" or "almost inevitable,"[69] a quasi-chemical process that happens to us simply by sharing in the common human nature. This type of soteriology has been

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63 The exception is Pseudo-Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* 4 (PG 29 688B–C): Ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ζῷον λογικὸν, θνητὸν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν· καὶ εἴ τι ζῶον λογικὸν, θνητὸν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικὸν, ἄνθρωπος τοῦτο· ἴδιον δὲ ἀνθρωπου τὸ γελαστικὸν, καὶ εἰ τι γελαστικὸν, ἄνθρωπος. However, the context there is not the distinction of Christ's humanity or flesh from his divinity, but the anti-Eunomian argument that being unbegotten (τὸ ἀγέννητος) is neither the definition (ὅρος) nor the proprium (ἴδιον) of God.

64 This list appears in *Eun.* 2,63. Cf. *Graec.* (GNO III/I 31,5–7); *Maced.* (GNO III/I 101,30–34); *Antirrh.* (GNO III/I 219,25–28); *Eun.* 1 496; 2.237; 491; 510; 511; *Ref.* 60; *Or. cat.* (GNO III/IV 45,18–20; 83,6–7; 102,16–19) *An. et res.* (PG 46 52C). For discussion of propria in Gregory, see A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009, 200– 207.

65 *Or. cat.* (GNO III/IV 66,13–21).

66 *Ibid.* (GNO III/IV 67,15–16).

67 See esp. *An. et res.* (PG 46 93B–C). For discussion of this aspect of Gregory's understanding of deification, see L. Ayres, "Deification and the Dynamics of Nicene Theology: The Contribution of Gregory of Nyssa", *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49 (2005) 375–394.

68 For discussion, see Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi*, 103–6, with the literature review at 3–25 and Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 125ff., 204–217. I cannot accept Zachhuber's claim that Gregory used Irenaeus and Athanasius in this area.

69 The latter phrase is Zachhuber's: *Human Nature*, 214.

juxtaposed, especially in neo-Kantian theology, to a more humanistic vision in which human agency and freedom are central. The question is really about how to take Gregory's language of human nature as well as metaphors like mixing. While it is clear that a drop of vinegar has no say in being absorbed into the infinite ocean, it is not clear that this is what Gregory intends for Christ's flesh or human nature. It is noteworthy that Pseudo-Athanasius insisted that Christ had an independent human will, though Gregory does not raise the issue here.[70] Also, the physical interpretation depends upon viewing human nature as a universal, and it is not clear that Gregory construed it as such in III 3, even if he clearly does elsewhere. In *CE* III 3, he seems to follow his anti-Eunomian sources in speaking more restrictively of *Christ's* human nature and flesh. When speaking of human nature here, he is most interested in the properties of this nature, especially human mortality. Of course, this is a property of universal human nature after the fall. But Gregory doesn't give us too much discussion of how Christ's humanity relates to humanity as a whole. This passage is perhaps the closest: "... so, stirring that small first-fruit of our nature (τὴν βραχεῖαν ἐκείνην τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀπαρχὴν) into the infinity of the divine power, he made that also just what he himself was: the form of a slave, Lord ..." (III 3,68). Here Gregory speaks of Christ's "corporeal nature" as "first-fruit of our nature".[71] But this language posits a distinction of some kind between Christ's corporeal nature and ours, even if the distinction is not one of kind but rather of temporal priority. While it is true that what occurs to his flesh is a foretaste of what will happen generally, we have *no* reason to assume that the process by which the two are connected is exclusively or even primarily "physical" or "automatic". What is described in physical terms in *CE* III 3 is the transformation of *Christ's* flesh into divinity.

5 Conclusions

Gregory found within the anti-Eunomian tradition seeds of a powerful Christology that is not captured by simplistic characterizations such as "dualistic" or "unitive"—labels that abstract formulae from the narrative of Christ's passion and glorification. Gregory's Christology is inherently bound to this narrative. "The flesh however is not the same as the godhead until it too is transformed into godhead"; before this, "some things conform with the divine

70 Ps.-Athanasius, *DICA* (PG 26 1021C).

71 The language of "first-fruit" is also prominent in Ps.-Athanasius, *DICA* (PG 26 989B, 996C, 997A, B, 1004B, 1012B).

Word, others with the form of a slave" (III 3,62). In Basil and in the broader anti-Eunomian tradition he found a "dual-focus" Christology that served him well in interpreting the range of verses that Eunomius relied upon. But he had to look beyond Basil to find a reading of *Acts* 2,36 as implying the transformation of humanity in the glorified Christ. With the language of mixture, Gregory carried his account of this transformation further than had been customary amongst pro-Nicenes. As a final observation, it is worth underscoring the formative influence of the Eunomian controversy upon matters of Christology. Fifth-century categories are inappropriate here; contrary to Pottier, it is anachronistic to posit that in *CE* III 3, Gregory was attempting a synthesis of Alexandrian and Antiochene Christology.[72] And far too much stress has been placed upon Apollinarius as the instigator of Gregory's Christological reflections.[73] In Eunomius, Gregory was already confronted with an opponent who held a strongly unitive Christology, and already had to address the charge of teaching two Christs (or at least of Basil doing so); both of these issues would return in the *Antirrheticus*. The coherence of Gregory's response remains an appropriate subject of debate. But his narrative of Christological "union" represents an intellectually serious and, I suspect, conscious re-working of prior anti-Eunomian tradition in a unitive direction.

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72 Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 247.

73 In addition to works already cited, one can note, e.g., Rowan Greer's assessment in his *Broken Lights and Mended Lives*, University Park 1986. For discussion of Greer, see Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 104–105.

Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* III 4

Johannes Zachhuber

1. The fourth tome of Gregory's third book against Eunomius is not a self-contained text. It continues a discussion Gregory had started in the previous tome, with which our current part forms a close thematic and structural unit. Its centrepiece is the exegesis of Acts 2, 36, a passage of which Eunomius had made heavy use in his *Apology* against Basil.[1] In the early part of *Contra Eunomium* III 3 Gregory offers a summary of Eunomius' exegesis and of the rather serious theological accusations against Basil's position resulting from it.[2] He then deals in varying detail with these objections throughout the latter part of the third and the early part of the fourth tome[3] only to return eventually to Acts 2,36 for a conclusive interpretation of this verse demonstrating its full compatibility with Nicene orthodoxy and exposing at the same time the many errors, blasphemies, and outright contradictions entailed, Gregory wishes his readers to accept, in Eunomius' understanding of this biblical text.[4]

In view of this fact, I shall not offer a running commentary of Gregory's argument in this particular text, but rather try to consider some outlines of his elaboration in a more systematic manner. The topic is Christology—in response to Eunomius, Gregory for the first time has to cope with the specific theological challenges of the doctrine of the Incarnation. It was not to be his last time as he was drawn, subsequently, into the Apollinarian controversy; the *Catechetical Oration* too offers substantive reflections on the same issue. One might therefore expect that the *Contra Eunomium* III, while not necessarily providing the most considered Christological exposition Gregory was capable of (he may have improved on his arguments while considering them further), offers a glimpse of the specific point of departure Gregory adopted in his attempt to formulate an answer to the perennial question of the relationship between divine and human in Christ. In fact, I shall argue that this precisely is what we find in our text and what makes it worthy of intensive and sustained study.

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1 Eunomius had already drawn on this verse in his first *Apology* (26,12–15 [Vaggione 70]) eliciting a rebuttal from Basil at *Adversus Eunomium* II 3 (PG 29, 576D–577A). See further below at n. 10.

2 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* III 3,12–29 (GNO II 111,12–118,13).

3 *CE* III 3,30–4,35 (GNO II 118,14–147,24).

4 *CE* III 4,35b–64 (GNO II 147,24–159,6).

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Generally, scholarly work on Gregory's Christology has not been extensive.[5] And those scholars who have directed their attention to this area have usually found it wanting. Tixeront is a well-known example:

> In several passages [Gregory] . . . seems to distinguish two persons in Jesus: the man, in the Savior, is a tabernacle where the Word dwells; the divinity is in Him who suffers. (Contra Eunomium III, 3, 51 (GNO II2 (Leiden, 1960), p. 126); ibid. 62 (130); Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium 54 (GNO III I (Leiden, 1958) 222f.)). However, the contrary tendency—the Monophysite tendency—is more striking and at times makes us feel somewhat uneasy.[6]

More recently, Brian Daley has attempted a more positive evaluation of Gregory's teaching on Jesus Christ—or this is at least what he announced at the outset of his article:

> [. . .] if one considers Gregory of Nyssa's theological portrait of Christ in its own terms—within the characteristic features of his thought and style, and within the context of the controversies that exercised him in his own day—one will find it remarkably powerful and also remarkably consistent, both in itself and with the rest of his thought on God, creation, and the mystery of salvation.[7]

Daley's paper is important and helpful in many ways; yet note how he ends:

> I suggest that he is not concerned with Christology in the same sense or to the same degree as Nestorius, Cyril, Theodoret and Leo would be, let alone Severus, Leontius of Byzantium and Maximus Confessor. He is concerned above all with Jesus Christ as the man in whom and through whom the infinite and saving reality of God touches us all: with preserving the transcendence of the God who is present in him, and with

5 J.-R. Bouchet, "Le vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse", *Revue Thomiste* 8 (1968) 533–582; B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du* Contre Eunome *avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Namur 1994, esp. ch. 3; B. Daley, "Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation. Gregory of Nyssa's Anti-Apollinarian Christology", *Modern Theology* 18 (2002) 497–506.

6 J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmes dans l'antiquité chrétienne* II, Paris 1912, 128 (ET: *History of Dogmas* II, St. Louis 1914, 127). Quoted from Daley, Divine Transcendence, 497.

7 Daley, Divine Transcendence, 498.

> emphasizing the transformation of that human reality which God, in the man Jesus, has made his own.[8]

I fear that the real point Daley wishes to make here is partly obscured by his choice of later theologians. If Gregory is merely concerned with the preservation of divine transcendence (that is, the full divinity of the Son) and his salvific presence with us, then he is not only far removed from the thought world of Cyril, Severus, or Leontius of Byzantium. He is then not either 'concerned with *Christology* in the same sense' as Athanasius, Apollinarius or probably even Irenaeus had been. In other words, what is at issue is not merely a kind of terminological refinement, which obviously cannot be presupposed in a fourth century author; the problem appears to be, according to Daley, that the more specifically Christological issue of the unity of God and man in Christ, the understanding of John 1,14 and its theoretical conceptualisation, seems largely absent from Gregory's writings. Gregory's overriding doctrinal concern, Daley suggests, is always theological (in the narrower sense of that word) and soteriological; he is therefore at pains to explain against Eunomius that human *salvation* depended chiefly on the presence in human nature of the second person of the Trinity. Christ's full and undiminished divinity is as absolutely indispensable for his salvific efficacy as his *real* presence in the flesh. It is for this reason that he considers Eunomius' (and later Apollinarian) charges against Basil's and his own Christological teaching at best merely technical pedantries and at worst malicious slander.

It is easy to reach such a conclusion; I have done so myself.[9] Yet I think that careful attention to the development of the argument in Gregory's anti-Eunomian treatise demonstrates that the Cappadocian was more aware than is often perceived of the need to address the unity of divine and human in Christ. I shall seek to show in the following that and how key passages in our present tome indicate the kind of answer Gregory wished to give to that challenge. He does not, I think, offer a fully developed version of that answer, and even if one were to give him credit for implications of his position that he did not care further to work out, his theory would display some considerable weaknesses. This notwithstanding, his attempt is significant not only insofar as it evidences Gregory's perceptiveness and a willingness to face a substantial theological challenge on the basis of his own theological premises, but by providing, in

8 Daley, Divine Transcendence, 503 (emphasis in the original).

9 J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Theological Background and Theological Significance*, SVigChr 46, Leiden 2000, 192; 212–217; 222; 230f.

spite of its shortcomings, some concepts that were to become important for later developments of the doctrine.

2. The problem Eunomius had raised in his writing against Basil, by any measure, was a real and intricate one. We might call it the problem of the subject of the salvific dispensation. Who was the one of whom St Paul had said that he 'emptied himself taking on the form of a servant' (Phil. 2,7)? And again, of whom had St Peter declared that 'God has *made* him Lord and Christ' (Acts 2,36)? Eunomius' own contention was that these and many similar statements throughout the Bible were necessarily said of the pre-existent Christ whom he calls, with John 1, 18, μονογενὴς θεός[10] and the image and seal (εἰκών, σφραγίς) of God's own power and energy.[11] Christ therefore must have been both different from, and subordinate to, the one and single God and, as far as Eunomius was concerned, this fact could only be expressed by relating him to God's ἐνέργεια since all attempts to derive the being of the Son from the *ousia* of the Father led to a number of absurd and blasphemous consequences.[12]

While there is good reason to consider the latter link in Eunomius' chain of arguments fairly idiosyncratic and, arguably, the cause of the wide and aggressive rejection his theology faced even in his own time, the same was not true of his initial premise. As it turned out, this was enough to put Basil and Gregory in an acutely embarrassing situation. For while tradition may not have supported Eunomius' rather extreme version of subordinationism, it certainly did consider the evidently subordinationist language of the Bible one good argument against the charge that the mere idea of the Incarnation violated very nearly everything that was universally agreed about God.[13] In other words, the fact that *kenosis* was predicated not of the supreme God himself, but of his Son,

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10 I am not aware that scholars have as yet studied Eunomius' understanding of this famous verse. That the original wording was deemed problematic from a post-Nicene position seems to be indicated by its replacement in the Byzantine text of the NT (and hence in most later translations) to the more familiar μονογενὴς υἱός, unigenitus filius etc. The fact that Eunomius connects his reference to Jn 1,18 with a use of γεννήσας would indicate that he reads the phrase as 'begotten God', which for him would have been equivalent, apparently, with an interpretation of Christ as 'made' (ποιήσας) in the image of God's power. For the difficult exegetical problems cf. from a NT perspective: D. A. Fennema, "John 1,18: 'God the Only Son'", *NTS* 31 (1985) 124–135.

11 Eunomius, *Apologia* 26, 8–15 (Vaggione 69–70).

12 M. R. Barnes, "Δύναμις and the Anti-Monistic Ontology of Nyssens' *Contra Eunomium*", in: R. C. Gregg (ed.), *Arianism. Historical and Theological Reassessment*, Patristic Monograph Series 11, Philadelphia 1985, 327–334, here: 228–230.

13 A paradigmatic case is that of Eusebius of Caesarea; cf. A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, London 1975^2, 177–185.

removed at least some of the scandal aroused by incarnational teaching. This argumentative prop was taken from the Cappadocians once they adopted the view that *qua* divinity Father and Son were the same,[14] and to replace it they employed the exegetical 'trick', originally invented by Marcellus of Ancyra, of applying to Christ's humanity those biblical passages that seemingly emphasised the Son's inferiority to the Father.[15] This is how Basil in his anti-Eunomian writing had explained both Acts 2,36 and, implicitly, Philippians 2,6–10:

> The Apostle's word (Acts 2,36) does not refer us to the pre-temporal hypostasis of the Only-begotten, with which the current argument is concerned. Nor, evidently, does he deal with the very being of God the Word, who was in the beginning with God (Jn 1,1), but with the one who emptied himself in the form of a slave (Philippians 2,7), became similar to the body of our own lowliness, and was crucified out of weakness (cf. Philippians 2,8).[16]

With this answer Eunomius was not satisfied, and we can easily see why. The point he makes in his *Second Apology* seems reasonable enough: the subject of the *kenosis* mentioned in Philippians 2,7 cannot be the human being as this would make nonsense of the logic of Paul's argument or, for that matter, of Peter's statement in Acts 2,36:

> For if it is not the Word who was in the beginning, and who is God, that the blessed Peter speaks of, but the visible one who has emptied himself, as Basil says, and the visible man emptied himself into the form of a slave, and the one who emptied himself into the form of a slave emptied himself into becoming man, then the visible man emptied himself into becoming man.[17]

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14 Johannes Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 53–55.

15 For the relationship between the Cappadocian position and Marcellus' views cf. R. M. Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra", in: M. Harl, (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1971, 199–229.

16 Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* II 3 (PG 29, 576D–577A): ἔτι οὐδὲ ἡ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου διάνοια τὴν πρὸ αἰῶνος ὑπόστασιν τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ἡμῖν παρίστησι, περὶ ἧς ὁ λόγος ἐν τῷ παρόντι. Οὐδὲ γὰρ περὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου, τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντος πρὸς τὸν θεὸν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ κενώσαντος ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῇ δούλου μορφῇ, καὶ γενομένου συμμόρφου τῷ σώματι τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, καὶ σταυρωθέντος ἐξ ἀσθενείας, σαφῶς διαλέγεται.

17 *Apud* Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* III 4,39 (GNO II 149,10–23): Εἰ γὰρ μὴ περὶ τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντος λόγου καὶ θεοῦ ὄντος ὁ μακάριος διαλέγεται Πέτρος, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ βλεπομένου καὶ κενώσαντος ἑαυτόν, καθώς φησιν ὁ Βασίλειος, ἐκένωσεν δὲ ὁ βλεπόμενος ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν εἰς δούλου μορφήν, ὁ

It is this challenge Gregory seeks to address in much of tome four. He is in no uncertainty as to Eunomius' wrongness, whose objective, he repeatedly asserts, merely is to drive home his own theory of Christ's essential difference from the Father, which according to Gregory would make salvation utterly impossible.[18] Yet Gregory struggles with an appropriate reply nonetheless.

Why is this so? It may help us appreciate Gregory's difficulties if we perceive that they result directly from a deep ambiguity within the biblical tradition itself. The New Testament presents its reader essentially with two parallel narratives of which one is historical relating the biography of a human individual, Jesus of Nazareth, who is born, brought up, teaches, gathers disciples, is tried, executed and then raised from the dead. The other one is the quasi-mythological, or in any case supra-historical, story about a pre-existent divine being, who 'comes down' in human form to effect the salvation of humanity and through his own suffering and dying brings about the eventual reconciliation between God and his creation. To be sure, these two narratives are never meant to be dealing with different subjects, but just how those two can really be one without collapsing one into the other is far from clear, and one might not go totally wrong in saying that the Church has never been able to offer a fully satisfactory answer to this question.[19]

The problem before Gregory then is not an imaginary but a real one. How does he address it? He is adamant, as we have seen, not to compromise the full divinity of the transcendent agent involved in the salvific process; he is equally clear that salvation requires a real contact between Christ's divinity and our humanity—hence this too cannot be played down. Right at the outset of the present tome, Gregory gives a concise summary of these two basic tenets:

> When we hear that he is Light, Power, Righteousness and Life, and that all things were made by him, we regard all these and similar things as credible, attributing them to the Word as God; when on the other hand we hear of pain, sleep, want, distress, bonds, nails, spear, blood, wounds, burial, tomb, and other such things, even though they are contrary to the

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δὲ κενώσας ἑαυτὸν εἰς δούλου μορφὴν εἰς ἀνθρώπου γένεσιν ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτόν, ὁ βλεπόμενος ἄνθρωπος εἰς ἀνθρώπου γένεσιν ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτόν.

18 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* III 4,3 (GNO II 134,21–135,6).

19 Cf. the interesting argument in J. Milbank, "The Name of Jesus. Incarnation, Atonement, Ecclesiology", in: *The Word Made Strange. Theology, Language, Culture*, Oxford 1997, 145–168. One may also compare Maurice Wiles' account: "Christianity without Incarnation?", in: J. Hick (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate*, London 1977, 1–10, for a well-argued presentation of the aporiae entailed by classical Christology.

> previous conclusions, we accept that these are no less credible and true, having regard to the flesh, which we have received in faith associated with the Word.[20]

Yet a statement such as this only serves to underline the urgency of finding an appropriate reply to Eunomius' charge that the Cappadocian position implied the teaching of 'two Lords and two Christs'.[21] Gregory's uncompromising emphasis on the undiminished divinity of the Logos and the equally complete humanity of the Incarnate only throws into sharp relief the apparent lack of a concept of unity that binds those two together in the person of the saviour. This was the problem Eunomius had identified in Basil's response to his original *Apology*; does Gregory have anything of a solution to offer?

3. I think that one can indeed identify in *Contra Eunomium* III 4 an attempt to address the issue of the saviour's divine-human unity, an attempt moreover that is broadly in keeping with the principles of Gregory's contemporary approach to the soul-body problem in his *De anima et resurrectione* and therefore, arguably, more than a mere *ad hoc* solution.[22] In analysing it, it is significant, first of all, to note Gregory's exposition of the problem. For him the question of Christ's unity primarily is one of soteriological co-operation or collaboration between the divine and the human element in the saviour. In other words, given that neither Christ's full divinity nor his full humanity must be compromised in our reconstruction of his salvific work, how we can understand their joint contribution to it? It is important, I think, to perceive this as the specific angle of Gregory's approach. By contrast, he seems fairly blind to the issue of *personal* or *individual* unity of Christ; given that his explicitly and extensively developed theory of the latter explains it as the hypostatisation of a common nature, the mere recognition of this issue would have exposed theoretical problems it took later theologians centuries to solve.[23]

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20 *CE* III 4,7 (GNO II 136,1–10): ὅταν μὲν γὰρ ἀκούωμεν ὅτι φῶς ἐστι καὶ δύναμις καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ἀλήθεια καὶ ὅτι πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, πάντα ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πιστὰ ποιούμεθα εἰς τὸν λόγον [τὸν θεὸν] ἀναφέροντες, ὅταν δὲ λύπην καὶ ὕπνον καὶ ἔνδειαν καὶ ταραχὴν καὶ δεσμὰ καὶ ἥλους καὶ λόγχην καὶ αἷμα καὶ τραύματα καὶ ταφὴν καὶ μνημεῖον καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα, κἂν ὑπεναντίως ἔχῃ τοῖς προαποδεδομένοις, οὐδὲν ἧττον πιστά τε καὶ ἀληθῆ εἶναι δεχόμεθα πρὸς τὴν σάρκα βλέποντες, ἣν τῇ πίστει μετὰ τοῦ λόγου παρεδεξάμεθα.

21 Eunomius, *AA*, cited in Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* III 3,15 (GNO II 112,14–16).

22 Cf. for the latter J. Zachhuber, "Die Seele als Dynamis in Gregor von Nyssa. Überlegungen zur Schrift *De anima et resurrectione*", in: C. Sedmak – M. Bogaczyk-Vormayr (ed.), *Patristik und Resilienz. Frühchristliche Einsichten in die Seelenkraft*, Berlin 2012, 211–230.

23 Cf. J. Zachhuber, "Universals in the Church Fathers", in: R. Chiaradonna/G. Galluzzo (eds.), *Universals in Ancient Philosophy*, Pisa 2013, 425–470.

Gregory's first and in a way chief reply, therefore, relates divine and human in Christ by associating them with the active and the passive aspect of the salvific process respectively:

> And we say that, inasmuch as the Son is God, he is of course impassible and pure, but if any suffering is attributed to him in the Gospel, he carried out such an act through the humanity, which was of course susceptible to suffering. The Godhead quite certainly carried out the salvation of the world through the body he wore, so that the suffering belonged to the flesh, the action to God.[24]

Gregory's point is easily missed in English given that we do not automatically perceive the link between 'suffering' and 'being passive', which becomes immediately evident in the Greek. Equally deceptive (although linguistically correct) is the rendering of *energeia* with action. What Gregory is trying to express here, I believe, is the complementarity in Christ between divine power as the energetic, active principle, and the human side as the receptive, passive one. If this is not perceived, it can easily appear as if Gregory was here merely restating the case he had made right from the beginning of his argument that, namely, in Christ divinity and humanity are to be kept apart and distinguished in their respective properties. He would then simply continue with the doomed effort of a 'divisive' Christology, as Grillmeier has called it.[25]

Yet his emphasis on activity and passivity moves beyond a mere duality and indicates a relation between the two; both are needed insofar as their roles complement each other in salvation. The active works while the passive is worked upon. Twice in this brief passage he uses the verb ἐνεργεῖν with the preposition διά to express this relationship: the divine 'carried out' (ἐνήργησεν) the suffering 'through the humanity, which was of course susceptible to suffering' (διὰ τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου πάντως τοῦ δεχομένου τὸ πάθος). Then again: 'The Godhead quite certainly carried out the salvation of the world through the body he wore' (ἐνεργεῖ γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡ θεότης διὰ τοῦ περὶ αὐτὴν σώματος τὴν τοῦ παντὸς σωτηρίαν). The same idea is then appropriately summed up in

24 *CE* III 4,8–9 (GNO II 136,18–24): καί φαμεν ὅτι, καθὸ θεὸς ὁ υἱός, ἀπαθὴς πάντως ἐστὶ καὶ ἀκήρατος, εἰ δέ τι πάθος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοιτο, διὰ τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου πάντως τοῦ δεχομένου τὸ πάθος τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐνήργησεν. ἐνεργεῖ γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡ θεότης διὰ τοῦ περὶ αὐτὴν σώματος τὴν τοῦ παντὸς σωτηρίαν, ὡς εἶναι τῆς μὲν σαρκὸς τὸ πάθος, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τὴν ἐνέργειαν.

25 Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 299 and passim (Grillmeier does not, however, apply the term to Gregory!).

a perfectly symmetrical statement: εἶναι τῆς μὲν σαρκὸς τὸ πάθος, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τὴν ἐνέργειαν.

Elsewhere in the same tome, Gregory elaborates the same point further. Different predicates are employed by St Paul for the divine and human in Christ, Gregory argues, so Scripture 'yields the human part to sufferings, while achieving through the divine power the resurrection of the one who had suffered'.[26] Once again the statement neatly expresses the equilibrium between the human element, which is associated with passivity and suffering, and the divine on the other hand, which is powerful and active in the compound. With this argument, then, Gregory arguable strikes a double-blow. On the one hand, he addresses the notorious issue of why and how Christ could have suffered while with and through his response to this criticism he also hinted at the rationale behind God's choice to save us specifically through a divine-human compound.

4. The present interpretation of Gregory's answer to Eunomius' Christological challenge is further strengthened and substantiated, I should claim, when the Cappadocian's frequent references in the current tome to Christ as the 'power' (δύναμις) of God are taken into account. Of course, Gregory is fond of using this particular epithet of the second Person of the Trinity throughout his works,[27] and yet there is a special emphasis on it in the present context. This emphasis indicates, I think, that Gregory saw the relationship between divine and human in the Incarnation as analogous to that observed in the world more general between God's immanent, providential power and created reality, which is directed and governed by the former without affecting its very nature:

> Observing his power penetrating (διήκουσαν δύναμιν) all things, in sky and air, on earth, and in the sea, and whatever is above the heaven and whatever is below the earth, we believe he pervades all things everywhere, but we do not say that he is any of those things, for the one who measures out the universe with all- embracing hand-span is not the sky, nor is the one who grips the circle of the earth, earth, nor water the one who contains all the liquid in existence. In just the same way, when he went through what are called the sufferings of the flesh, we do not say that he is passible, but as cause of all things and grasping the universe, and by

26 *CE* III 4, 15: διδόντος μὲν τοῖς παθήμασιν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον μέρος, ἐνεργοῦντος δὲ τὴν τοῦ πεπονθότος ἀνάστασιν διὰ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως.

27 Cf. M. R. Barnes, *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington D.C. 2001.

> the indescribable power of his own majesty steering all that moves and keeping firm in its place what stands still.[28]

It is interesting to recall here a strikingly similar passage from *De anima et resurrectione*, probably written shortly before the *Contra Eunomium* III:[29]

> Just, then, as we have no doubts, owing to the display of a Divine mysterious wisdom in the universe, about a divine nature and a divine power existing in it all which secures its continuance (though if you required a definition of that Nature you would therein find the deity completely sundered from every object in creation, whether of sense or thought, while in these last, too, natural distinctions are admitted), so, too, there is nothing strange in the soul's separate existence as a substance (whatever we may think that substance to be) being no hindrance to her actual existence, in spite of the elemental atoms of the world not harmonizing with her in the definition of her nature.[30]

In the latter passage, Gregory seeks to exploit the well-known analogy of macrocosm and microcosm[31] to urge his own conclusion that from the observation of life and sense perception in the human body we must infer the existence of a life principle effective in the body yet not identical with it in its ontological constitution.[32] An analogous point, then, would seem to underlie the former

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28 *CE* III 4,30 (GNO II 145,12–25): ὥσπερ τοίνυν τὴν διὰ πάντων αὐτοῦ διήκουσαν δύναμιν κατανοοῦντες ἐν οὐρανῷ τε καὶ ἀέρι καὶ γῇ καὶ θαλάσσῃ καὶ εἴ τι ἐπουράνιον καὶ εἴ τι καταχθόνιον, πανταχοῦ μὲν καὶ διὰ πάντων αὐτὸν εἶναι πιστεύομεν, οὐδὲν δὲ τούτων τῶν ἐν οἷς ἐστιν ἐκεῖνον εἶναί φαμεν (οὐ γὰρ ὑρανός ἐστιν ὁ διειληφὼς αὐτὸν τῇ περικρατητικῇ τοῦ παντὸς σπιθαμῇ οὐδὲ γῆ ὁ κατέχων τὸν γῦρον τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ ὕδωρ πάλιν ὁ τὴν ὑγρὰν περιέχων φύσιν), οὕτως οὐδὲ διὰ τῶν λεγομένων τῆς σαρκὸς παθημάτων ἐλθόντα ἐμπαθῆ αὐτὸν εἶναί φαμεν, ἀλλ' ὡς τῶν ὄντων αἴτιον καὶ τοῦ παντὸς περιδεδραγμένον καὶ τῇ ἀφράστῳ δυνάμει τῆς ἰδίας μεγαλειότητος πᾶν τό τε κινούμενον οἰακίζοντα καὶ τὸ ἑστὼς ἐν παγίᾳ συντηροῦντα τῇ βάσει.

29 On the date of *An et res* cf. I. L. E. Ramelli, *Gregorio di Nissa. Sull'anima e la resurrezione*, Milano 2007, 7.

30 *An. et res.* (PG 46, 44B–C): Ὥσπερ οὖν διὰ τῆς ἀπορρήτου σοφίας τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς τῷ παντὶ ἐμφαινομένης τὴν θείαν φύσιν τε καὶ δύναμιν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσιν εἶναι οὐκ ἀμφιβάλλομεν, ὡς ἄν ἐν τῷ εἶναι τὰ πάντα μένοι: καὶ τοί γε εἰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως ἀπατοίης λόγον, παμπλήθως ἀπέχει οὐσία Θεοῦ πρὸς τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον ἐν τῇ κτίσει δεικνυμένα τε καὶ νοουμένα: ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐν τούτοις εἶναι τὸ διεστὸς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ὁμολογεῖται: οὕτως οὐδὲν ἄπιστον καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς οὐσίαν, ἄλλο τι καθ' ἑαυτὴν οὖσαν, ὅ τί ποτε καὶ εἶναι εἰκάζεται, μὴ ἐμποδίζεσθαι πρὸς τὸ εἶναι, τῶν στοιχειωδῶς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θεωρουμένων οὐ συμβαινόντων αὐτῇ κατὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς φύσεως.

31 Gregory cites it equally in *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 177D–180A).

32 Cf. *An. et res.* (PG 46, 25A–29B).

passage as well: from the observation of a certain kind of activity in Christ it follows that the power active in him must be divine and thus ontologically different from the object of our observation. Not only is this co-existence of different kinds of being in the same individual object possible, then, it is what we must conclude from a considered reflection of what we see and experience.

The significance of Christ's identity with the Father's wisdom (cf. 1 Corinthians 1,24) for Gregory's Christology is further confirmed by his (idiosyncratic)[33] exegesis of Psalm 77,10.[34] The 'change of the Right Hand of the Most High', according to Gregory, points to the Incarnation. The 'Right Hand of the Father' (as Gregory subsequently substitutes) is, he argues, 'the power that makes the universe, which means the Lord.[35] With this phrase, the biblical writer denotes the Son who, 'while being from the [Father], is conceived of by himself as his own individuality (hypostasis)'.[36] That the text ascribes a 'change' (ἀλλοίωσις) to him, then, cannot mean that he undergoes a transformation in his divinity (any more than something like this would be possible in the Father himself), but merely that he became incarnate:

> We claim that, as far as the definition of his nature is concerned, the Right Hand does not differ from him whose Right Hand he is, nor can any other variation be attributed to it than the fleshly economy. For the God manifested in the flesh was in truth himself the Right Hand of God, seen through the flesh itself by those of clear vision: as the one who did the works of the Father, he was, and was considered to be, the Right Hand of God; but inasmuch as he was robed in the veil of flesh in his visible form, he was perceived as varying from what by nature he was.[37]

Once again the analogy with the argument encountered, for example, in the passage from *de anima et resurrectione* cited above is evident. The *dynamis*

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33 The (near) lack of a parallel is noted in *NPNF* II/5, 298, n. 782.

34 *Ps* 76,10 in LXX: καὶ εἶπα Νῦν ἠρξάμην, αὕτη ἡ ἀλλοίωσις τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ ὑψίστου.

35 *CE* III 4,24 (GNO II 143,6–8): τὴν ἀλλοίωσιν τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ ὑψίστου—δεξιὰν δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ λέγομεν δύναμιν τὴν ποιητικὴν τοῦ παντός, ἥτις ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος.

36 *CE* III 4,24 (GNO II 143,9–10): ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἐκείνου μὲν οὖσα, ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς δὲ κατ' ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν θεωρουμένη.

37 *CE* III 4,24 (GNO II 143,10–9): τοῦτό φαμεν ὅτι οὔτε ἡ δεξιὰ κατὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς φύσεως ἐκείνου παρήλλακται, οὗ ἐστι δεξιά, οὔτε ἀλλοίωσις αὐτῆς ἄλλη τις παρὰ τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς οἰκονομίαν λέγεσθαι δύναται. ἦν γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡ δεξιὰ τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτὸς ὁ ἐν σαρκὶ φανερωθεὶς θεός, δι' αὐτῆς τῆς σαρκὸς τοῖς διορατικοῖς καθορώμενος, καθὸ μὲν ἐποίει τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρός, δεξιὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὢν καὶ νοούμενος, ἐν ᾧ δὲ περιείχετο τῷ τῆς σαρκὸς προκαλύμματι κατὰ τὸ βλεπόμενον, ἀλλοῖος παρ' ὃ τῇ φύσει ἦν θεωρούμενος.

that becomes visible in and through the flesh permits the perception of his divine nature in the 'veil of flesh' (τῷ τῆς σαρκὸς καλύμματι) within which he was robed (περιείχετο) in his 'visible form' (κατὰ τὸ βλεπόμενον). Christ as the 'right hand' of God, the Father, is his consubstantial power and, as such, the active element in the incarnational compound.

The same line of reasoning, finally, leads Gregory to a specific use of John 14,9.[38] Jesus' word to Philip ('He who has seen me has seen the Father') is expounded by the Nyssen as follows:

> Look through what varies to the invariable, and if you look at that, you will see the Father himself, whom you seek to see; for he who has seen me, has seen, not the one who appears in the variation, but the true me, who am in the Father, his very self, in whom I am, for he will perceive the same stamp of Godhead in us both.[39]

Once again, the significance of this exegesis for Gregory's Christological argument comes out fully only by linking the concept of the divine-human relationship as active and passive aspects in the person of the saviour, which he develops in the present context, with his wider idea of *dynamis* as the experiential foundation of transcendence. As the world becomes transparent for God on account of the presence and immanence of his power in it, and the human body by its display of vital and sentient functions points the observer to the existence of a soul, so the one who properly 'sees' Jesus penetrates the material surface and discovers the divine within it. Yet as in the other cases, this discovery does not invalidate the original, sensual perception so much as it transforms and enriches it. This is why Gregory believed that the same model could be applied to Christology; the dynamis perceived in visible reality is strictly immanent in that reality even though, according to the Cappadocian, it must be understood ontologically and axiologically to be of a different kind.

At the same time, nothing proves as distinctly as this particular passage how little Gregory is aware of some of the most controversial issues in future Christological debate. He can only perceive John 14,9 as a handy prooftext for his argument because he does not even remotely realise the severe consequences potentially following from his argument. For Gregory, nature

38 *CE* III 4,25 (GNO II 143,19–26).

39 *CE* III 4,25 (GNO II 143,20–6): βλέπε διὰ τοῦ ἀλλοιωθέντος τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον, κἂν τοῦτο ἴδῃς, αὐτὸν τὸν πατέρα, ὃν ζητεῖς ἰδεῖν, ἑωρακὼς ἔσῃ: ὁ γὰρ ἑωρακὼς ἐμέ, οὐ τὸν ἐν τῇ ἀλλοιώσει φαινόμενον, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀληθῶς ἐμὲ τὸν ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ὄντα, αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον ἑωρακὼς ἔσται τὸν ἐν ᾧ εἰμι, τῷ τὸν αὐτὸν χαρακτῆρα τῆς θεότητος ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν καθορᾶσθαι.

is universal and hence to say that the Incarnate partakes of divine nature is tantamount to saying that he participates in those properties which all three Persons share, 'the same stamp of Godhead' as he calls it here. Yet if this is true, what prevents us from predicating the Incarnation of Father and Spirit as well? Of course, Gregory had made it clear a little earlier that the Incarnation precisely was the one 'change' (ἀλλοίωσις) setting the Son apart from the Father,[40] but his willingness to illustrate his point by reference to John 14,9 without feeling the need to qualify this exegesis, is in itself telling.

5. It may be helpful for the purpose of further elucidation and clarification of Gregory's Christological argument to recall at this point that a time-honoured philosophical tradition had given complementary roles to active and passive principles in the functioning of the world. Already Aristotle's dualism of matter and form could be read in such a way, but it was in particular stoicism that had introduced τὸ ποιοῦν and τὸ πάσχον as fundamental principles (ἀρχαί) of natural philosophy:

> They [the Stoics] think that there are two principles of the universe, that which acts [τὸ ποιοῦν] and that which is acted upon [τὸ πάσχον]. That which is acted upon is unqualified substance, i.e. matter; that which acts is the reason [λόγος] in it, i.e. god. For this, since it is everlasting, constructs [δημιουργεῖν] every single thing throughout all matter . . .[41]

The active principle is 'constructing' or creating everything by virtue of its immanence in matter. I leave aside Gregory's view of the latter; it is a separate topic that would need full consideration within the context of Gregory's overall (ontological as well as cosmological) appropriation of these theories.[42]

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40 *CE* III 4,24 (GNO II 143,12–3).

41 *SVF* I 85 (p. 24,5–8); English translation: A. A. Long – D. N. Sedley (eds.), *The Hellenistic Philosophers* I, Cambridge 1987, 268: δοκεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς ἀρχὰς εἶναι τῶν ὅλων δύο, τὸ ποιοῦν καὶ τὸ πάσχον. τὸ μὲν οὖν πάσχον εἶναι τὴν ἄποιον οὐσίαν τὴν ὕλην· τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον τὸν θεόν. τοῦτον γὰρ ἀΐδιον ὄντα διὰ πάσης αὐτῆς δημιουργεῖν ἕκαστα.

42 As is well known, Gregory in a number of places denies the existence of matter: *An. et res.* (PG 46, 124C–D); *Hex.* (PG 44, 69B–C); *Op. hom.* 24 (PG 44, 212D–213C). In this he *prima facie* follows Basil: *Hom. in hex.* (PG 29, 21A–D). Cf. also Plotinus, *Enn.* II 4,11,1–13; Origen, *Princ.* IV 4,7 (Koetschau 357,29ff). The problem is discussed by A. H. Armstrong, "The Theory of the Non-Existence of Matter in Plotinus and the Cappadocians", *StPatr.* 5 (1962) 427–429 (= A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, London 1979); R. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, London 1983, 290–294; J. Zachhuber, "Stoic substance, non-existent matter? Some passages in Basil of Caesarea reconsidered", *StPatr.* 41 (2006) 425–431.

Be this as it may, as for τὸ ποιοῦν the parallel becomes even more distinct and impressive when other texts are taken into account, which equate this principle not only with the terms God and logos (as we have here seen), but also with dynamis.[43] Gregory's preferred phrase for its immanence, διήκειν, is also a Stoic favourite;[44] expressions typical for the Nyssen, such as 'the power of God that pervades the universe'[45] definitely have a Stoic ring to them. It is significant, then, that he explicitly identifies this kind of item with the divine element in the saviour.

Why such a concept would appeal to Gregory in the present context becomes immediately clear when one recalls that, as John Rist writes, 'the two principles [are] physically inseparable, so that this duality is reached by a logical, or conceptual, distinction'.[46] In other words, we would here have an analogy for a real unity which, however, still allows for, even requires, analysis into two radically different yet complementary, components. Precisely this, of course, had been the challenge Eunomius had presented to Basil's affirmation of Christ's full divinity alongside his real participation in human nature. In order to meet this challenge, I had argued, Gregory had to address the problem of the saviour's divine-human unity, and it appears now that the duality of active and passive principles offered him a model for the explanation of the latter. Given that, moreover, Gregory had availed himself of the same or at least a similar model in a variety of other contexts, we cannot be surprised to find him using it in the present context as well.

Interestingly, Gregory himself makes the point about the physical inseparability of the two principles explicitly with regard to two parts of the divine-human compound in Christ:

> The mind separates what out of love for humanity is taken into unity, but kept distinct in thought.[47]

It is mind (ἐπίνοια) and thought (λόγος) that separate the two; otherwise they form a complete unity. This statement of principle is followed by a list of phrases used by St Paul for the divine aspect of Christ on the one hand, for the

43 *SVF* II 1047 (p. 308,37–40).

44 *SVF* I 153 (p. 41,22–24); II 473 (p. 155,24–30).

45 *CE* III 4, 30 (GNO II 145,13): τὴν διὰ πάντων αὐτοῦ διήκουσαν δύναμιν.

46 J. M. Rist, *The Stoics*, Berkeley, London 1978, 139.

47 *CE* III 4,15 (GNO II 139,6–8): τῆς οὖν ἐπινοίας διαιρούσης τὸ κατὰ φιλανθρωπίαν μὲν ἡνωμένον, τῷ δὲ λόγῳ διακρινόμενον.

human on the other[48] only to lead to a reaffirmation of Gregory's fundamental idea of the relational duality of an active divinity and a passive, suffering humanity within the salvific work accomplished by Christ:

> [...] yielding the human part to sufferings (τοῖς παθήμασιν), while achieving (ἐνεργοῦντος) through the divine power (διὰ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως) the resurrection of the one who had suffered (τὴν τοῦ πεπονθότος ἀνάστασιν).[49]

Even Gregory's occasional use of the term 'mixture',[50] which has sometimes been taken as indication for his weak notion of divine-human unity,[51] points to the same intellectual background: the Stoics were happy to describe the relationship between soul and body as mixture while in the same context using many of the terms Gregory has been drawing on in his present discussion of Christology.[52] While it is true that their philosophical opponents denied that mixture could produce actual unity,[53] and while it is also true that this kind of terminology later on became associated with Nestorianism, it would appear that for Gregory it was acceptable and unproblematic insofar as it conveyed the same general notion of unity he had been developing throughout his discussion. Given the way he employs it in the present context, it seems hardly justified to suspect that he believed it to weaken the unity of divine and human in Christ let alone that he used it for that very reason.

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I take it then that Gregory under the condition, in which he found himself, was attracted to an application to Christology of the Stoic model of a unified world made up of an active and a passive principle. It is not difficult to see why: he believed that this model neatly fit the twin challenge he perceived: that neither

48 *CE* III 4,15 (GNO II 139,8–15).

49 *CE* III 4,15 (GNO II 139,19–21).

50 *CE* III 4,13 (GNO II 138,18): ἀνάκρασις.

51 See n. 6.

52 *SVF* II 473 (p. 155,25–28).

53 Cf. Nemesius of Emesa, *De natura hominis* 3 (Morani 38,12–39,11), which Heinrich Dörrie has argued draws on Porphyry (*Porphyrios'* Symmikta Zetemata: *Ihre Stellung in Geschichte und System des Neuplatonismus, nebst einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten*, Zetemata 20, Munich 1959). Cf. the copious references to philosophical parallels in: *Nemesius, On the Nature of Man*, transl. with and introduction and notes by R. W. Sharples – P. J. van der Eijk, Liverpool 2008, 78–80.

one nor the other side in the compound should be compromised, but at the same time their unity be maintained.

Perhaps the biblical passage Gregory struggled to explain also played its part. Peter, after all, says that God 'made' the crucified Jesus Lord and Christ. The use of the term ποιεῖν had evidently been crucial for Eunomius' exegesis;[54] it would not perhaps be far-fetched to see it as important for Gregory's argument as well; in other words, his insistence on the dialectics between God's active power and energy and the passive and receptive human nature might well reflect his reading that, according to St Peter God 'made' Jesus something, that is Lord and Christ. The divine thus is ποιοῦν in the Incarnation according to the very words of the apostle.

The question of course is whether this model does not take Gregory way too far in the direction of what would later be called miaphysitism. The Stoic theory presupposes, as we have seen, that the passive principle is what it is because it is unqualified matter (ἄποιος ὕλη). Within this model it makes sense to identify the thing itself with the active principle—all that can be said about it is what God has made of it; the passive principle has to be presumed there but is otherwise nothing. In his exegesis of John 14,9, which has been discussed above, Gregory seems to come close to this point of view as he calls Jesus' divinity his 'true me'.[55] Yet how can this be a legitimate explanation of God's Incarnation? Can Jesus' humanity be fully affirmed if it is treated as mere passivity? Obviously, from either a Stoic or an Aristotelian point of view it makes little or no sense to identify an item such as humanity *per se* with the passive principle. Gregory would have to argue that in relation to the immense power of God humanity is reduced to something like quasi-passivity (the famous drop of vinegar in the vast ocean),[56] yet it ought to be noted that he operates with more than one notion of 'passivity': the passions Jesus undergoes as part of his human life, suffering, and death may involve the possibility of passivity, but are not identical with it. On the contrary, they can only be understood if the subject that experiences them is in some ways an active agent. Quite how,

54 Cf. Eunomius, *Apologia* 26,13–14 (Vaggione 70): τοῦ μὲν οὖν *πεποιῆσθαι* μάρτυς ἀξιόπιστος ὁ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μαρτυρηθεὶς ἐκ θεοῦ τὴν γνῶσιν ἔχειν Πέτρος …

55 *CE* III 4,25 (GNO II 143,23): τὸν ἀληθῶς ἐμέ.

56 *Theoph.* (GNO III 1, 126,17–21). Or again, one may be reminded of Friedrich Schleiermacher's argument that in relation to God man is 'absolutely dependent' (*The Christian Faith*, tr. H. R. Mackintosh – J. S. Stewart, Edinburgh 1999, § 4, p. 12). I note only in passing that for Schleiermacher's Christology it is central to assume that Christ is God-man because he was fully dominated by this absolute dependency (op. cit. pp. 377–424 and cf. esp. § 97)—surely more than a passing influence of the later Greek tradition.

then, the relationship between active and passive principles can meaningfully be applied to Christology is far from clear in our present text.

Still, Gregory does offer an intuition that was to become highly influential in later Christological debate. Giulio Maspero has, in a recent paper, rightly drawn attention to the fact that and how the Christology developed in the present tome was used by Justinian in the context of the Second Council of Constantinople (553).[57] Yet much further work was needed to explain what this particular model could explain, and with which qualifications, with regard to the divine-human relationship in the person of Christ.

6. The analysis of Gregory's Christological argument in the fourth tome of *Contra Eunomium* III cannot, however, end here yet. For the Cappadocian evidently did not think that the interpretation of the Incarnation in terms of a mixture (ἀνάκρασις)[58] of active and passive principles was sufficient for his present purpose. After all, he had to explain Peter's word that God *made* Jesus Lord and Christ; evidently this referred to some kind of change or transformation. Eunomius had argued that this was the transformation from non-being to being, the initial creation of the pre-existent.[59] Gregory, I think rightly, sees that this makes little sense exegetically. After all, the verse does not use the word 'to make' (ποιεῖν) just with an object (i.e. 'God made Christ') but uses a predicative construction, 'God made this Jesus Christ and Lord.' Yet while his close attention to the text supports his claims against Eunomius, it adds a further element to be considered for his own solution. The unity of divine and human in Christ, Gregory believes, cannot simply be considered in static terms, but has a dynamic dimension as well.

Arguably, Gregory did not need much to be persuaded of such a reading. After all, we know from many other contexts not least his theory of creation, how fond he was of a 'dynamic' understanding of divine agency in the world.[60] Given the specific constituency of created being, Gregory thought, it was proper for God to execute his eternal and immutable will in creation through a regular, evolutionary development, for which Gregory famously employed the term

57 G. Maspero, "La cristología de Gregorio de Nisa desde la perspectiva del II Concilio de Constantinopla", *Scripta Theologica* 36 (2004) 385–410, esp. 389–90.

58 *CE* III 4,13 (GNO II 138,18).

59 Eunomius, *Apologia* 26,7–10 (Vaggione 68).

60 Cf. J. C. M. Van Winden, "Notiz über ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ bei Gregor von Nyssa", in: H. Eisenberger (ed.), *EPMHNEYMATA. Festschrift für Hadwig Hörner zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, Frankfurt 1991, 147–150.

ἀκολουθία.[61] In a way, this principle makes its reappearance as a Christological concept in the present context. Gregory, in other words, thinks of the unity of divine and human in Christ in such a way that the divine progressively works on and transforms the human element.

In this sense he comments that the 'creation' St Peter refers to really is a 're-creation' as it refers to the gradual transformation of human nature in the Incarnation,

> [...] the mutation and remaking of the human into divinity; [this remaking] the apostle calls 'making'.[62]

Elsewhere the same point is made again:

> So just as he who knew no sin is made sin (2 Corinthians 5,21), so that he may take away the sin of the world (John 1.29), so conversely the flesh, which received the Lord, is made Christ and Lord, which by nature it was not, transformed [= 'recreated'] into it by the mixing. By this we learn that the God would not have appeared in the flesh (1 Timothy 3.16), if the Word had not been made flesh (John 1,14), nor would the human flesh he wore have been transformed ['recreated'] into the divine, if the visible had not been made Christ and Lord.[63]

In passages such as this, it could be argued that Gregory does no more than use the terminology of divinization, which Athanasius had put into the classical formula that God became man so that we might become gods[64] and which by Gregory's time had become fairly conventional. The Nyssen clearly is aware of this theological tradition, which he uses extensively across a variety of his writings.[65]

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61 Cf. the classical paper by J. Daniélou, "Akolouthia chez Grégoire de Nysse", *RevSR* 27 (1953) 219–249.

62 *CE* III 4,20 (GNO II 141,9–10): τὸ δὲ διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου μεταβολήν τε καὶ μεταποίησιν. ποίησιν γὰρ ὁ ἀπόστολος λέγει τὴν μεταποίησιν.

63 *CE* III 4,46 (GNO II 151,1–9): ὥσπερ οὖν ὁ μὴ γνοὺς ἁμαρτίαν ἁμαρτία γίνεται, ἵνα ἄρῃ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, οὕτως πάλιν ἡ δεξαμένη τὸν κύριον σὰρξ Χριστὸς καὶ κύριος γίνεται, ὃ μὴ ἦν τῇ φύσει, εἰς τοῦτο μεταποιουμένη διὰ τῆς ἀνακράσεως. δι' ὧν μανθάνομεν ὅτι οὔτ' ἂν ἐν σαρκὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐφανερώθη, εἰ μὴ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, οὔτ' ἂν μετεποιήθη πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἡ περὶ αὐτὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου σάρξ, εἰ μὴ τὸ φαινόμενον ἐγένετο Χριστός τε καὶ κύριος.

64 Athanasius, *De incarnatione* 54,3 (PG 25, 192B).

65 The classical and most elaborate example is *Perf.*

And yet, the context of his argument here makes it evident that Gregory's reference to the logic of the divine-human reciprocity in the Incarnation is merely auxiliary to his main interest, which is quite different. Notable is his use, twice in the present passage, of cognates of the word 'recreation' (μεταποιουμένη, μετεποιήθη). Gregory, as we noted a moment ago, argues that this is precisely how St Peter meant the word 'to make' in Acts 2,36. Gregory then is still very much concerned with his interpretation of this very verse! What he is aiming at, then, through the use of the Athanasian deification-language is an emphasis on the character of the Incarnation as a process in the course of which human nature is *gradually* transformed into something more divine:

> When therefore I learn from Peter that this one has been made, I do not hesitate to say that the one before our eyes has become Lord and Christ, since the saints agree with one another especially about this part; for just as he says that the crucified has been made Lord, so Paul also says that he was highly exalted after the passion and resurrection, not exalted insofar as he is God—for what is exalted above the height of God, so that one could say that God is exalted to it?—but he is saying that the lowly aspect of the human nature is highly exalted, the text indicating, I think, the assimilation and union of the man assumed with the exaltation of the divine nature.[66]

It is not difficult at this point to perceive quite what made Gregory so interested in the step-by-step transformation of human nature in the Incarnation. It is the specific mention in Acts 2,36 of 'this Jesus whom ye crucified'. Gregory is quite explicit: 'the crucified has been made Lord', he writes, and brings in Philippians 2,9, which mentions the exaltation after (and as a consequence of) Christ's obedient suffering.

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66 *CE* III 4,55–56 (GNO II 155,12–23): τοῦτον οὖν μαθὼν πεποιῆσθαι παρὰ τοῦ Πέτρου κύριον καὶ Χριστὸν τὸν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν γεγενημένον λέγειν οὐκ ἀμφιβάλλω, ἐπειδὴ καὶ συμφωνοῦσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ ἅγιοι τοῖς τε ἄλλοις πᾶσι καὶ περὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος. ὡς γὰρ αὐτὸς τὸν σταυρωμένον κύριον πεποιῆσθαι λέγει, οὕτω καὶ Παῦλός φησιν αὐτὸν ὑπερυψῶσθαι μετὰ τὸ πάθος καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, οὐ καθὸ θεός ἐστι, κατ' ἐκεῖνο ὑψούμενον (τί γὰρ ὑπέρκειται τοῦ θείου ὕψους ἀνώτερον, ὥστε πρὸς ἐκεῖνο λέγειν τὸν θεὸν ὑψοῦσθαι;) ἀλλὰ τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ὑπερυψοῦσθαι λέγει, δεικνύντος οἶμαι τοῦ λόγου τὴν τοῦ ἀναληφθέντος ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸ ὕψος τῆς θείας φύσεως ἐξομοίωσίν τε καὶ ἕνωσιν.

Two ideas, then, are combined in Gregory's argument: on the one hand, his interpretation of Christ's salvific work in the Incarnation in terms of the deification of human nature; on the other hand, the notion that the exaltation of Christ's humanity reaches its climax only with his resurrection.[67] It is the latter more than the former that deserves attention in the present context. For while few would perhaps deny that such a view has solid biblical support, by the standards of fourth-century orthodoxy it clearly smacked of adoptianism. As we shall see in an instant, Gregory was quickly taken up on this problem.

As far as the *Contra Eunomium* III 4 is concerned, however, Gregory evidently is unconcerned about any such risk. On the contrary, it appears that he finds the idea of such a gradual divinisation of humanity in Christ attractive beyond the need to interpret Acts 2,36:

> We should therefore consider what is more devout and logical: of which is it religiously correct to say that by advancement he shares some exalted status, the God, or the Man? Whose mind is so infantile that he thinks the divinity progresses towards perfection? It is not unreasonable to think such a thing of the human nature, when the gospel text attests his growth as a human being: 'Jesus advanced,' it says, 'in stature, wisdom and grace' (Luke 2,52). Which then is it more reasonable to suppose is meant by the apostle's word, that the God who is in the beginning became Lord by advancement, or that the lowly status of human nature was taken up by its fellowship with the divine into the highest rank?[68]

That Gregory here moves a step beyond the exegesis of Acts 2,36 is clear above all by his use of the word προκοπή. Gregory, in other words, does not content himself with the observation that somehow the divinisation of human nature

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67 Cf. on this K. Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den großen Kappadoziern*, Tübingen, Leipzig 1904, 229. Different: J. Lenz, *Jesus Christus nach der Lehre des hl. Gregor von Nyssa*, Trier 1925, 117. Cf. the summary in: R. J. Kees, *Die Lehre von der Oikonomia Gottes in der* Oratio Catechetica *des Gregor von Nyssa*, SVigChr 30, Leiden 1995, 285.

68 *CE* III 4,59–60 (GNO II 157,8–20): οὐκοῦν ἐπισκεψώμεθα τὸ μᾶλλον εὐσεβὲς καὶ ἀκόλουθον. τίνα κατὰ προκοπὴν μετέχειν τινὸς τῶν ὑψηλοτέρων εὐαγές ἐστι λέγειν, τὸν θεὸν ἢ τὸν ἄνθρωπον; τίς οὕτω παῖς τὴν διάνοιαν ὡς οἴεσθαι τὸ θεῖον ἐκ προσθήκης ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον φέρεσθαι; περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως τὸ τοιοῦτον ὑπονοεῖν οὐκ ἔξω τοῦ εἰκότος ἐστί, σαφῶς τῷ κυρίῳ τῆς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου φωνῆς τὴν κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον αὔξησιν προσμαρτυρούσης· Ἰησοῦς γὰρ προέκοπτεν, φησίν, ἡλικίᾳ καὶ σοφίᾳ καὶ χάριτι. τί τοίνυν εὐλογώτερόν ἐστιν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἀποστόλου φωνῆς ὑποτίθεσθαι, τὸν ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντα θεὸν ἐκ προκοπῆς κύριον γενέσθαι ἢ τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον κοινωνίας εἰς τὸ ὕψος τῆς ἀξίας ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι;

lasted for a certain number of years, which would explain the duration of the Incarnation; rather he brings in here a reference to the moral and religious *improvement* Jesus underwent throughout his earthly life. Characteristic is his reference to the famous verse Luke 2, 52 (Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτεν…). Given Gregory's interest in his ascetic writings in establishing Christ as the exemplar of human ascetic virtue, one should not, perhaps, be too surprised about such a move though it also proves, if proof be needed, that Gregory was perfectly capable, when energised by his speculative *eros*, of overlooking a great many warning signs that were posted by his time along the road of theological reflection. Epiphanius ascribes the notion of Jesus' ethical 'advancement' to the Ebionites[69] while other fourth-century bishops condemn this as a view held by the followers of Paul of Samosata.[70] Gregory's own *Epistle* 3 shows how he himself was challenged over this issue by angry opponents in Jerusalem, probably only slightly after writing the *Contra Eunomium* III, who forced him into a humiliating recantation.[71]

7. Be this, however, as it may, the outlines of Gregory's argument in *Contra Eunomium* III 4 should by now have become reasonably clear. In order to disprove not only Eunomius' own exegesis of Acts 2,36, but also his charge against Basil of teaching 'two Lords and two Christs', Gregory offers a very specific interpretation of the Incarnation. By drawing on his favourite view of Christ as the 'power' of God as well as Stoic notions of the ontologically complementary nature of active and passive principles, he conceptualises the Incarnation as the unity of God and man in precisely this sense. This helps him defend Basil against the charge of a divisive Christology without having to give up either the anti-Eunomian commitment to Christ's full divinity nor the corresponding need to maintain his humanity.

Furthermore, in line with ideas about the dynamic character of God's agency in creation developed elsewhere, Gregory thinks of this divine-human unity within an evolutionary framework. Hence, the transformation of human nature, worked through the Incarnation, which Gregory thinks very much analogous to Athanasius, progresses gradually and is only complete, as both Peter and Paul intimate, in his resurrected state. This notion of a progressive divinisation of humanity in the Incarnation, apparently, appeals to Gregory

69 Epiphanius, *haer.* 30,18 (Holl I 358,3–6).

70 *Ekthesis Macrostichos* IV (Hahn 111–112).

71 J. Zachhuber, "Gegen welchen Vorwurf muss Gregor von Nyssa sich in seinem Dritten Brief verteidigen? Neuerliche Gedanken zu einer viel diskutierten Frage", in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ Θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 385–396.

not only in view of his exegesis of Acts 2,36, but also allows at least a glimpse on the significance of Jesus' own spiritual and ascetic life, whose theological relevance Gregory develops in some other writings.

It is when viewed in its complete form that strength and weaknesses of this conception become strikingly obvious. I think the charge often levelled against Gregory's Christology that he has no notion of the unity of human and divine in Christ, cannot be upheld. It is evident that he quite understands the challenge to Basil's teaching from Eunomius' polemic and that he seeks to counter it. His model, if its reconstruction as presented in my paper has any claim to accuracy, addressed this point by understanding the unity of divine and human in analogy to that of the active and the passive principle in Stoic philosophy.

However, by the same token the inadequacy of Gregory's approach is seen in full light as well. It is not by coincidence that the Stoic model of active and passive principle is, in Stoic philosophy, part of physics. It is geared towards explaining the physical universe. It is not, in other words, meant to explain human, personal existence. Now, one might argue that Stoic parallels do not indicate that Gregory's own reasoning is necessarily Stoic, but I should argue that even if one allowed this qualification, the problem in Gregory's thought would still be the same. His approach to Christology is conceived in terms of 'natures'—Christ's divine nature must be seen as being fully part of the trinitarian Godhead, whereas his human nature is of one being with us (to use the later phrase, for which Gregory paves the way). Their unity, again, is seen as the 'physical' problem of how two different principles can make one unified being. The question, however, how all this produces Christ as one individual person is completely absent from Gregory's reasoning. In a sense, neither the divine nor the human are conceptualised in his argument as something like personal agents; this I think is the failure from which his Christology really cannot be acquitted and which, I believe, gives it the unsatisfactory character which most readers have, for different reasons, felt and acknowledged over time.

Der Geist als Wesen, die Aussage des Namens und die οὐσία bei Eunomius, Basilius und Gregor von Nyssa

Contra Eunomium III 5 (*GNO* II, 160–184)

Lenka Karfíková

Im fünften Teil des dritten Buches *Contra Eunomium* erörtert Gregor von Nyssa grundsätzlich zwei Themen: (1) Eunomius' Interpretation des Bibelverses *2 Kor* 3,17 („Der Herr aber ist der Geist"), deren Widerlegung er eine kleine Abhandlung über die Bibelexegese hinzufügt, und (2) die Distinktion zwischen ungezeugt/gezeugt einerseits und ungeschaffen/geschaffen andererseits in ihrer Bedeutung für die Trinitätslehre.[1] Der Gedankengang seines Gegners Eunomius in seiner verschollenen *Apologia Apologiae* ist aus Gregors rhetorischer Polemik manchmal schwierig rekonstruierbar, deswegen stütze ich mich neben den durch Gregor überlieferten Zitaten gelegentlich auch auf die erste *Apologia* des Eunomius und auf ihre Widerlegung durch Basilius, auf die Eunomius mit der *Apologia Apologiae* reagierte.[2] Im Folgenden versuche ich nicht nur die beiden Hauptthemen des fünften Teiles darzustellen, sondern auch die zusammenhängenden Fragen anzudeuten, die in unserem Passus mit im Spiel sind, nämlich die Pneumatologie, die unterschiedliche Semantik der Eigennamen in ihrer Relevanz für die Trinitätslehre, und den keineswegs eindeutigen οὐσία-Begriff der drei Autoren.

1 Der umstrittene Vers 2 Kor 3,17 (*CE* III 5,1–7)

Den umstrittenen Bibelvers *2 Kor* 3,17: „Der Herr aber ist der Geist" (Ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν) zitiert Eunomius als einen Beleg seiner These, dass „der Herr" eine Aussage des Wesens, nicht nur der Würde sei.[3] Er wehrt sich damit gegen die Interpretation, die Basilius von einer anderen Bibelstelle gibt, nämlich *Apg* 2,36: „Gott hat ihn (Jesus) zum Herrn und Christus gemacht" (καὶ κύριον

1 Einen Vorschlag der Gliederung füge ich in einer Appendix an (s. unten, S. 368).

2 In die ganze Polemik führt z.B. J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa, Contra Eunomium I 1–146* (*eingeleitet, übersetzt und kommentiert*), Patrologia 2, Frankfurt a.M. 1993, 9–72, ein.

3 Vgl. *CE* III 5,1 (GNO II 160,3 f.): Ἐπεὶ δέ φησι τὴν Κύριος λέξιν τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ μονογενοῦς, οὐ τῆς ἀξίας κατηγορεῖσθαι.

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αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός). Eunomius hat nämlich in seiner ersten *Apologia* diesen Vers aus der *Apostelgeschichte* unter denjenigen Bibelzitaten angeführt, in denen der „Eingeborene Gott" als geschaffen (πεποιῆσθαι) bezeugt sei.[4]

In seiner Polemik unterscheidet daher Basilius zwischen der Hypostase (ὑπόστασις) des Eingeborenen (oder auch der οὐσία des göttlichen Logos), die „am Anfang bei Gott war" (*Joh* 1,2), und demjenigen, der sich „in Sklavengestalt" „entäußerte" und „aus Schwachheit gekreuzigt wurde" (vgl. *Phil* 2,7; *2 Kor* 13,4). Diese etwas riskante Unterscheidung entspricht nach Basilius derjenigen zwischen der „Theologie" (θεολογία), d.h. der Rede von Gott in seiner Dreieinigkeit, und der „Ökonomie" (οἰκονομία), d.h. Gottes gütiger Sorge für die Menschen. Das „Herr-werden" Christi, das nicht sein Wesen (οὐσία), sondern seine Macht (ἐξουσία) zum Ausdruck bringt, beschreibt nach der Interpretation des Basiulius nicht die ewige Geburt des Sohnes aus dem Vater, mit der sich die „Theologie" beschäftigt, sondern die Erhöhung Christi, die im Rahmen der „Ökonomie" betrachtet wird.[5]

Der Vers *2 Kor* 3,17 („Der Herr aber ist der Geist") wird durch Basilius im pneumatologischen dritten Buch seiner Polemik als ein Beleg dafür zitiert, dass der Heilige Geist der Natur des Vaters und des Sohnes nicht fremd sein kann, weil in der Bibel beide auch „Geist" genannt werden. Gott (d.h. der Vater) wird ja als „Geist" bezeichnet (*Joh* 4,24), und auch Christus, so meint zumindest Basilius, wird in *Lam* 4,20 („Der Geist vor unserem Angesicht, der Herr Christus" in einer ungenauen Paraphrase durch Basilius) und *2 Kor* 3,17 „Geist" genannt.[6] Diese Argumentation wirkt etwas befremdend, nicht nur wegen der künstlichen christologischen Interpretation der beiden letzten Verse, sondern auch da hier der Heilige Geist nicht deutlich vom „Geist" als Wesensaussage vom Vater und Sohn unterschieden wird.[7] Diese beiden Mängel wird Gregor korrigieren, wie wir gleich sehen werden.

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4 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 26 (Vaggione 70,12–15).

5 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 3 (SC 305, 16–18).

6 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* III 3 (SC 305, 154,5–156,16): Οὐ τοῦτο δὲ μόνον αὐτῷ κοινὸν πρὸς Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν τὸ τῆς ἁγιωσύνης ὄνομα, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος προσηγορία. Πνεῦμα γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτὸν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν (*Joh* 4,24). Καὶ ὁ προφήτης φησί· Πνεῦμα πρὸ προσώπου ἡμῶν Χριστὸς Κύριος, οὗ εἴπαμεν· Ἐν τῇ σκιᾷ τῶν πτερύγων αὐτοῦ ζησόμεθα (*Lam* 4,20). Καὶ ὁ Ἀπόστολος τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος προσηγορίαν ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον ἀναφέρει λέγων· Ὁ δὲ Κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν (*2 Kor* 3,17). Ἐκ δὲ τούτων παντὶ δῆλον, ὅτι οὐχὶ ἀλλοτρίωσιν τῆς φύσεως, ἀλλ' οἰκείωσιν πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν ἡ κοινωνία τῶν ὀνομάτων παρίστησι. *Lam* 4,20 LXX: Πνεῦμα προσώπου ἡμῶν χριστὸς κυρίου („Unser Lebensatem, der Gesalbte des Herrn").

7 Basilius reagierte mit dieser Argumentation auf die pneumatologische Passage der ersten *Apologia* des Eunomius, der zufolge der Heilige Geist nicht mit dem Vater und dem

Eunomius antwortete mit einer christologischen Ausführung, in der er die zwei unterschiedlichen Subjekte des Eingeborenen und des erhöhten Christus kritisierte, wie sie in der Polemik des Basilius etwas unvermittelt nebeneinander zu stehen drohen. Davon erfahren wir in der Antwort, die Gregor in seinen christologischen Erörterungen in *CE* III 3,12–4,64[8] gibt, wo er die Argumentation des Eunomius zitiert (*CE* III 3,15–25). Dieser Zitat endet mit einem „syllogistischen Gedankengang" (συλλογιστικῶς, wie ihn Gregor bezeichnet),[9] in dem Eunomius u.a. den Vers *2 Kor* 3,17 als einen Beleg dafür anführt, dass „der Herr" ein Wesen sei, um dann die Identität dieses „gemachten" Herrn mit dem „Wort am Anfang" zu zeigen.[10] Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, dass Eunomius in seiner Argumentation den Bibelvers *2 Kor* 3,17 anwendet, weil ihn (in einer christologischen Deutung) auch Basilius für seine Pneumatologie benutzt hat.

In unserem Passus nimmt Gregor aus der Argumentation seines Gegners einen anderen „Syllogismus" aus, um ihn misszudeuten und lächerlich zu machen:

> (Eunomius) behauptet, dass hier der „Geist" an Stelle des „Wesens" steht, um dadurch syllogistisch zu beweisen, dass der Ausdruck „Herr" dem Wesen entspreche. Falls nämlich der Geist ein Wesen ist und zugleich der Herr der Geist ist, dann gilt sicherlich auch, dass der Herr ein Wesen ist.[11]

Das Argument des Eunomius durfte sein: (1) Der Geist ist ein Wesen. (D.h. Jeder Geist ist ein Wesen.) (2) Der Herr ist der Geist (*2 Kor* 3,17) (D.h. Der Herr ist ein

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Sohn identisch sein kann. Er wird von beiden deutlich unterschieden, da ja Gott (nach *Joh* 4,24) im Geist verherrlicht werden soll (und der Verherrlichte kann nicht mit dem Verherrlichenden eins sein); und der Geist wird (nach *Joh* 14,16.26; 16,6.13) auch als eine selbständige Hypostase nach dem Sohn gesandt, und kann deswegen nicht einmal mit ihm identisch sein, vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 66,13–68,19).

8 Zur Rolle des Bibelvers *Apg* 2,36 in dieser christologischen Abhandlung, vgl. B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du* Contre Eunome *avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Namur 1994, 47–49; M. Cassin, „*Contre Eunome* III: L'exegèse structure-t-elle l'argumentation?", in: M. Cassin – H. Grelier (Hrsg.), *Grégoire de Nysse: la Bible dans la construction de son discours* (*Actes du colloque de Paris, 9–10 février 2007*), Études augustiniennes, série Antiquité 184, Paris 2008, 73–88, hier 78–81.

9 Vgl. *CE* III 5,5 (GNO II 162,1 f.).

10 *CE* III 3,25 (GNO II 116,21–28). Vgl. unten, Anm. 12.

11 *CE* III 5,5 (GNO II 161,7–162,4): . . . ἀντὶ τῆς οὐσίας κελεύει τὸ πνεῦμα παραλαμβάνεσθαι, ἵνα συμπεράνῃ συλλογιστικῶς τὸ κατὰ τῆς οὐσίας συγκεῖσθαι τὴν κύριος λέξιν; εἰ γὰρ τὸ πνεῦμα οὐσία ἐστίν, ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν, ὁ κύριος οὐσία πάντως εὑρίσκεται. Die deutschen Übersetzungen in diesem Beitrag stammen von der Verfasserin.

Geist.) Also: Der Herr ist ein Wesen. Beide Prämissen und auch der Schluss wurden dabei von Eunomius höchstwahrscheinlich nicht als eine Identifizierung, sondern als eine Subsumierung gemeint. Ein Teil von Gregors polemischer Strategie bestand darin, die erste Prämisse als eine Identifizierung Geist=Wesen misszudeuten, um zeigen zu können, dass eine solche Gleichsetzung nirgendwo in der Heiligen Schrift vorkommt und überhaupt unsinnig ist.[12]

Der andere Teil seiner Strategie war zu beweisen, dass Eunomius den Vers *2 Kor* 3,17 falsch versteht, da diese Bibelaussage überhaupt nicht von Christus, sondern vom Heiligen Geist spricht. Sie kann schon daher den Gedankengang des Eunomius nicht untermauern.

2 Die Bibelinterpretation nach Gregor anhand von 2 Kor 3,7–18 (*CE* III 5,8–16)

Um eine Interpretation des Bibelverses *2 Kor* 3,17 („Der Herr aber ist der Geist") anzubieten und damit die Unangemessenheit der „buchstäblichen" Lektüre durch Eunomius zu zeigen,[13] entwickelt Gregor eine kleine Theorie der Bibelexegese, die sich auf den Passus *2 Kor* 3,7–18 stützt und die in manchem Origenes (*De princ.* IV) verpflichtet ist.

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12 Vgl. *CE* III 5,1–7 (GNO II 160–162). In diesem Fall scheint Gregor der Argumentation seines Gegners nicht gerecht zu werden. Ein schwierigeres Problem ist jedoch der andere Teil der Argumentation des Eunomius, wie er in *CE* III 3,25 (GNO II 116,21–28) zitiert wird: καὶ πολύ γε τούτου γυμνότερον αὐτὴν τὴν οὐσίαν ὀνομάζει κύριον εἰπὼν Ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν. εἰ τοίνυν ὁ ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγος, καθὸ πνεῦμα, κύριος καὶ τῆς δόξης κύριος, τοῦτον δὲ τὸν κύριον καὶ Χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸν θεὸν λόγον ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς καὶ οὐκ ἄλλον τινὰ κύριον, ὃν ὀνειροπολεῖ Βασίλειος. Die Argumentation (ohne im aristotelischen Sinne „syllogistisch" zu sein) darf in mehreren Schritten rekonstruiert werden: (1) Der Herr ist der Geist (*2 Kor* 3,17). (2) Das Wort am Anfang ist Geist. (3) Daher ist das Wort am Anfang der Herr. (4) Der Herr wurde aber von Gott gemacht (*Apg* 2,36). (5) Daher wurde das Wort am Anfang von Gott gemacht.—Der Schritt (3), höchstwahrscheinlich als eine Identifizierung, nicht als eine Subsumierung verstanden, kann jedoch von (1) und (2) nur abgeleitet werden, falls auch diese als eine Identifizierung, nicht als eine Subsumierung verstanden werden: (1*) Der Herr ist mit dem Geist identisch. (Nicht: Der Herr ist ein Geist.) (2*) Das Wort am Anfang ist mit dem Geist identisch. (Nicht: Das Wort am Anfang ist ein Geist.) Dies ist jedoch offensichtlich sachlich falsch. In diesem Fall hätte wohl Gregor Recht, wenn er die Argumentation seines Gegners als eine falsche Identifizierung blamierte.—Ich danke Prof. Marcello La Matina aus Macerata, der mit mir die Frage einer möglichen (besser gesagt: der unmöglichen) Formalisierung des Arguments diskutierte.

13 Zur Rolle des Bibelvers *2 Kor* 3,17 in dieser christologischen Abhandlung, vgl. B. Pottier, *Dieu*, 76.371 f.; M. Cassin, „*Contre Eunome* III", 81 f.

Die ganze Bibel ist ein Werk des Heiligen Geistes und ihre Intention (βούλημα) ist ein Nutzen für die Menschen.[14] Ihr vielfältiger Nutzen (vgl. *2 Tim* 3,16) kann jedoch nicht durch eine Lektüre erfahren werden, die nur die Oberfläche des Textes betrachtet (ἐκ τοῦ προχείρου).[15] Die göttliche Absicht wird nämlich durch den „Körper" der Schrift wie durch einen Vorhang verhüllt[16] (wie schon Origenes ausgeführt hat)[17] und muss hinter den Geboten und Erzählungen des biblischen Textes erst gesucht werden. Wer nur den „körperlichen" Sinn versteht, dessen Herz wird durch einen Schleier umhüllt, der ihm die Schau des eigentlichen Sinnes verstellt. Der Apostel bedient sich der alttestamentlichen Erzählung von dem umhüllten Antlitz des Gesetzgebers Mose, um dieses Hindernis metaphorisch anzudeuten (*2 Kor* 3,13–15; vgl. *Ex* 34,34).[18]

Es handelt sich jedoch bei einer solchen Lektüre, so Gregor, nicht um ein bloßes Unverständnis, sondern um ein verkehrtes Verständnis, das aus dem Bibeltext geradezu das Gegenteil der verborgenen göttlichen Absicht herausliest. Wo z.B. der historische Sinn der Erzählungen (ἱστορία) die natürlichen, manchmal auch unangemessenen Bewegungen der Natur (τοῖς τῆς φύσεως πάθεσιν) zu unterstützen scheint, will die eigentliche Absicht der Schrift im Gegenteil die vollkommene Tugend, d.h. die *Apatheia*, lehren. Der Leser, der nur den Sinn an der Oberfläche des Textes (κατὰ τὸ πρόχειρον) wahrnimmt und sich mit ihm auf eine „eher körperliche Weise" (σωματικώτερον) beschäftigt, kann durch sein unangemessenes buchstäbliches Verständnis zum Tode geführt werden. Daher, wie der Apostel sagt, „tötet der Buchstabe, während der Geist lebendig macht" (*2 Kor* 3,6).[19]

Nur diejenigen Leser, die den „intelligiblen Sinn" (τὸ νοητόν) hinter dem Buchstaben des Textes sehen, können „das Eigentliche" (κύριον) des Textes verstehen, nämlich den Geist als den Urheber der Schrift in ihrem eigentlichen

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14 Vgl. *CE* III 5,8 (GNO II 163,3–5): ἡ θεόπνευστος γραφή … τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματός ἐστι γραφή, τὸ δὲ βούλημα ταύτης ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶν ὠφέλεια. Ähnlich versteht die Absicht des Heiligen Geistes, der die Schrift inspiriert, auch Origenes, *De principiis* IV 2,7 (SC 268, 326–328).

15 Vgl. *CE* III 5,9 (GNO II 163,9 f.).

16 Vgl. *CE* III 5,9 (GNO II 163,10–12): οἷον παραπετάσματί τινι τῷ σώματι τῆς γραφῆς τὸ θεῖον ὑποκρύπτεται βούλημα.

17 Origenes kennt die Metapher der Bibel, die auf drei verschiedenen Ebenen interpretiert werden kann, da sie ähnlich wie ein Mensch aus dem Körper, der Seele und dem Geist (ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος vgl. *1 Thess* 5,23) besteht (*De principiis* IV 2,4, SC 268, 312,122–125). Ähnlich spricht er von einem „pneumatischen Sinn" der Schrift, der unter dem Gewand des körperlichen Sinnes verborgen ist: τὸ ἔνδυμα τῶν πνευματικῶν, λέγω δὲ τὸ σωματικὸν τῶν γραφῶν (*De principiis* IV 2,8, SC 268, 334,260 f.).

18 Vgl. *CE* III 5,9 (GNO II 163,13–18).

19 Vgl. *CE* III 5,10–11 (GNO II 163,18–28).

Sinn.[20] Dieses schwierig übertragbare Wortspiel Gregors gründet auf die alttestamentliche Metapher, die schon der Apostel benutzt. Nach der Schilderung der Gesetzesgabe im Buch *Exodus* war nämlich das Gesicht des Moses bedeckt, solange er sich unter dem Volk aufhielt; als er jedoch zum Herrn hineinging, nahm er den Schleier ab (*2 Kor* 3,17; vgl. *Ex* 34,34). Der Apostel (und nach ihm auch Origenes)[21] interpretiert diese „Hinwendung zum Herrn" (ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον), bei der der Schleier weggenommen wird, als eine christologische Lektüre des biblischen Textes, d.h. eine Bekehrung zum Heiligen Geist, der die Freiheit schenkt (*2 Kor* 3,14–17). Gregor liest die „Hinwendung πρὸς κύριον" zuerst als das „Finden des eigentlichen Sinnes" (κύριον) im Text, um sie zugleich mit dem Apostel als die „Bekehrung zum Herrn (πρὸς κύριον)", d.h. zum Heiligen Geist, umzudeuten: „Dieser Herr ist nämlich der Geist." (Ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν.)

Das Eigentliche des biblischen Textes ist damit der Herr, nämlich der Heilige Geist als der Urheber der inspirierten Schrift, dessen „Herr-Sein" (κυριότης) ein Gegenteil zur Sklaverei des Buchstabens darstellt.[22] Die Worte der Propheten und der Apostel sind ja nach dem Zeugnis der Heiligen Schrift selbst als Worte Gottes zu verstehen (vgl. *Apg* 28,25–27 über Jesaja 6,9–10;[23] *Hebr* 3,7–11 über *Ps* 95,7–11;[24] *Matth* 22,43–45 über *Ps* 110,1).[25] Wäre daher der „körperliche Schleier" des biblischen Wortes (τὸ σωματικὸν τοῦ λόγου προκάλυμμα) weggenommen, müsste der Herr allein, nämlich das Leben und der Geist, bleiben (vgl. *Joh* 6,63).[26] Die Interpretation, die hinter dem Buchstaben des Textes seinen eigentlichen Sinn findet, sieht damit die enthüllte Herrlichkeit des Herrn (*2 Kor* 3,18).[27]

Der umstrittene Satz des Apostels („Der Herr aber ist der Geist.") will damit das Wesentliche der Schrift, d.h. den Herrn, zu dem man sich bekehrt, mit dem Heiligen Geist identizifieren. Es handelt sich nicht um eine Aussage darüber, was Christus sei, wie Eunomius den Vers missdeutete, weil er sich nur durch den Buchstaben des Textes führen ließ. Dass auch Basilius im dritten Buch seiner Polemik den Vers christologisch interpretierte, sagt Gregor jedoch nicht.

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20 Vgl. *CE* III 5,11 (GNO II 164,4–8): τὸ δὲ διὰ τῆς ὑψηλοτέρας κατανοήσεως εὑρισκόμενον κύριον εἶναί φησιν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ πνεῦμα. ἡνίκα γὰρ ἂν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περιαιρεῖσθαι λέγει τὸ κάλυμμα· ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι.

21 Vgl. Origenes, *De principiis* IV 1,6 (SC 268, 282,172–176).

22 Vgl. *CE* III 5,11 (GNO II 164,4–9).

23 Vgl. *CE* III 5,13–14 (GNO II 164 f.).

24 Vgl. *CE* III 5,14 (GNO II 165).

25 Vgl. *CE* III 5,14–15 (GNO II 165).

26 Vgl. *CE* III 5,15–16 (GNO II 165).

27 Vgl. *CE* III 5,11 (GNO II 164,2–4).

3 Der Geist als Hypostase und der Geist als Wesen (*CE* III 5,12–18)

Einen Hinweis darauf, dass der „Herr" in *2 Kor* 3,17 nicht mit dem Eingeborenen gleichzusetzen ist, findet Gregor sogar in dem umstrittenen Vers selbst. Der Apostel spricht ja nicht nur vom „Herrn, der Geist ist" sondern auch vom „Geist des Herrn" (πνεῦμα κυρίου, *2 Kor* 3,17), d.h. dem Geist Christi. Dadurch wird zwar dem Geist die Würde des Herrn zugestanden, zugleich jedoch die Eigentümlichkeit seiner Hypostase (τὸ τῆς ὑποστάσεως ἰδιάζον) nicht aufgelöst, er wird als etwas Selbständiges (ἴδιόν τι) neben dem Eingeborenen anerkannt.[28]

Gregor ist jedoch keineswegs dagegen, den „Geist" auch als das Wesen zu verstehen. Selbst das Evangelium sagt ja, dass Gott (ein) Geist ist (*Joh* 4,24).[29] Man kann daher Eunomius auch zugestehen, dass das Wesen des Eingeborenen (der) Geist ist, wie der Geist auch das Wesen des Vaters ist.[30] Auf diese Weise kann man die Waffen der Gegner für die eigenen Zwecke benutzen und mit den ägyptischen Reichtümern die eigene Lehre zieren (vgl. *Ex* 12,35–36).[31] In diesem Fall ist jedoch der Geist als eine Wesensaussage, nicht als eine Bezeichnung der Hypostase des Heiligen Geistes zu verstehen.

Diese Ausführungen Gregors, obwohl etwas künstlich mit der Interpretation des Verses *2 Kor* 3,17 verbunden, spielen im Kontext der ganzen Polemik eine wichtige Rolle. Eunomius hielt nämlich den Geist für „die erste" und „einzigartige Schöpfung" des Eingeborenen, „die zwar der Gottheit und der schöpferischen Macht entbehrt", dafür jedoch „eine heiligmachende und erbauende" Funktion ausübt.[32] Er versteht den Geist daher auch als eine selbständige Hypostase, die sich von derjenigen des Eingeborenen unterscheidet.[33] Der Geist, als der dritte der Würde (ἀξιώματι) und der (Entstehungs-) Ordnung (τάξει) nach, muss jedoch auch als der dritte der Natur nach (τὴν φύσιν) angesehen werden.[34]

Gegen diese Pneumatologie wehrt sich das dritte Buch *Adversus Eunomium* des Basilius,[35] in dem die göttliche Natur des Heiligen Geistes erörtert wird. Wie wir gesehen haben, wird die Hypostase des Geistes an der genannten Stelle jedoch nicht ganz deutlich vom Geist als Wesen unterschieden. In seiner

28 Vgl. *CE* III 5,12–13 (GNO II 164,11–19).

29 Zu diesem Vers bei Eunomius und Basilius vgl. oben, S. 336 mit Anm. 6 und 7.

30 Vgl. *CE* III 5,17 (GNO II 166,2–4).

31 Vgl. *CE* III 5,16 (GNO II 165 f.).

32 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 68,24–26).

33 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 68,16 f.).

34 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 66,4 f.).

35 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* III 1–7 (SC 305, 144–174).

Polemik gegen Eunomius will Gregor also nicht nur die Ausführungen seines Gegners widerlegen, sondern zugleich stillschweigend einige Korrekturen am Gedankengang seines Bruders machen: es geht nicht bloß um die Interpretation des Verses *2 Kor* 3,17, sondern auch um die Unterscheidung des Geistes als einer Hypostase und des Geistes als des Wesens.

4 Gezeugt/ungezeugt versus geschaffen/ungeschaffen (*CE* III 5,26–38)

Die perfide *spoliatio Egyptiorum*, die Gregor in unserem Passus unternimmt, besteht jedoch nicht nur darin, den Geist als das Wesen zu verstehen, sondern besonders in Gregors Aneignung der Regel des Eunomius, nach der mit gleichen Namen gleiche Wesen, mit unterschiedlichen Namen jedoch unterschiedliche Wesen bezeichnet werden.[36] Eunomius wandte diese Regel an, um zu zeigen, dass das „Ungezeugte" und das „Gezeugte" als unterschiedliche Namen auch zwei unterschiedliche Wesen bezeichnen, und deswegen der Eingeborene keineswegs mit dem Ungezeugten das gleiche Wesen teilen kann. Gregor versucht dagegen diesen Grundsatz als einen Beleg des gleichen Wesens (d.h. der gleichen Natur) des Vaters und des Sohnes zu benutzen, die beide ihrem Wesen nach „Geist" genannt werden. Falls sie nicht das gleiche Wesen teilen, wäre es ja nach der Regel des Eunomius unsinnig, sie mit dem gleichen Namen zu bezeichnen.[37]

Genauso unsinnig jedoch ist es, setzt Gregor seine *spoliatio* fort, zwei gleiche Wesen mit unterschiedlichen Namen zu benennen. In einer Rede von zwei Menschen wäre es ja verrückt, den einen als „Menschen", den anderen jedoch als „Pferd" zu bezeichnen, wie Eunomius selber ausführt.[38] Das unvernünftige vierfüßige Wesen und der Mensch lassen ja nicht die gleiche Definition zu, da es sich um einen Übergang in eine andere Art (τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἑτερογενὲς παρατροπήν) handelt, setzt Gregor den Gedankengang seines Gegners fort.[39]

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36 Vgl. *CE* III 5,18 (GNO II 166,11–16): τῶν παρηλλαγμένων οὐσιῶν παρηλλαγμέναι πάντως καὶ αἱ σημαντικαὶ τῆς οὐσίας εἰσὶ προσηγορίαι ἐφ' ὧν δὲ μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ φωνή, ἓν πάντως ἔσται καὶ τὸ τῇ αὐτῇ προσηγορίᾳ δηλούμενον (ein Eunomius-Zitat). Ähnlich schon Eunomius, *Apologia* 18 (Vaggione 56,13 f.).

37 Vgl. *CE* III 5,17–18 (*GNO* II 166,2–24).

38 Vgl. *CE* III 5,26 (*GNO* II 169,10–13): τίς οὕτως ἠλίθιος καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης καταστάσεως ἐκτός, ὡς περὶ ἀνθρώπων διαλεγόμενος τὸν μὲν εἰπεῖν ἄνθρωπον, τὸν δὲ ἵππον καλεῖν συγκρίνων; (ein Eunomius-Zitat).

39 Vgl. *CE* III 5,27 (GNO II 169,16–25).

Beide unterscheiden sich in der charakteristischen Eigentümlichkeit (τῷ ἰδιάζοντι), nämlich in der Vernünftigkeit (τὸ λογικόν) bzw. in dem ungespaltenen Huf (τὸ μονώνυχον), wobei die Eigentümlichkeit des einen keineswegs mit dem anderen verknüpft werden kann.[40] Obwohl das Gregor nicht direkt sagt, er scheint vorauszusetzten, dass die Namen der Arten („Mensch" oder „Pferd" im Rahmen des Genus „Lebewesen") immer an eine charakteristische Eigentümlichkeit gebunden sind und deswegen nicht auf diejenigen Wesen übertragen werden können, die diese Eigentümlichkeit nicht teilen.

Wie es nun unsinnig ist, von zwei Menschen einen als „Menschen", anderen jedoch als „Pferd" zu bezeichnen, da beide das gemeinsame Wesen „Mensch" teilen und die Eigentümlichkeit des Pferdes bei keinem von ihnen festgestellt werden kann, sowenig kann auch nach Gregor der Sohn als „geschaffen" bezeichnet werden, da er ebenso wie der Vater ein Gott ist.[41] Die Gottheit des Sohnes, die in der Heiligen Schrift bezeugt wird (vgl. *Joh* 1,18), hat Eunomius (nach seiner ersten *Apologia* und auch nach dem Zeugnis des Gregors) nicht geleugnet.[42] Nur hat er—in Gregors Augen unzulässig—die Gottheit in die ungeschaffene und die geschaffene unterschieden.[43] Dies will Gregor anhand des Beispiels des Eunomius selbst als einen „Übergang in eine andere Art" (τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἑτερογενὲς παρατροπήν) ablehnen.

Eunomius verstand offensichtlich die Aussagen „geschaffen" (ποίημα) und „gezeugt" (γέννημα) als einander nahestehend, wenn nicht sogar gleichbedeutend. Er sah jedoch eine Unterschiedlichkeit des Wesens zwischen dem Gezeugten-Geschaffenen einerseits und dem Ungezeugten-Ungeschaffenen andererseits.[44] Gregor will dagegen die grundlegende Wesensunterscheidung nicht zwischen dem Ungezeugten und dem Gezeugten, sondern zwischen dem Ungeschaffenen (ἄκτιστον) und dem Geschaffenen (κτιστόν), nämlich zwischen Gott und der Schöpfung treffen. Der Eingeborene steht aber deutlich an der Seite des Schöpfers, da durch ihn nach dem Zeugnis der Heiligen Schrift die Schöpfung gemacht wurde (vgl. *Jes* 66,2, wo der Sohn durch die „Hand" Gottes angedeutet ist, oder *1 Kor* 8,6). Deswegen kann er keinesfalls die gleiche Natur wie die geschaffenen Dinge haben.[45] Die Gottheit des Sohnes schließt aus, dass er als „geschaffen" bezeichnet wird, genauso wie die Menschheit eines Menschen es unmöglich macht, ihn „Pferd" zu nennen. Weder kann

40 Vgl. *CE* III 5,28 (GNO II 169,25–28).

41 Vgl. *CE* III 5,27 (GNO II 169,16–25).

42 Vgl. *CE* III 5,33 (GNO II 171,26–172,1); Eunomius, *Apologia* 21 (Vaggione 60,13–17).

43 Vgl. *CE* III 5,32 (GNO II 171,19 f.): τοῦ τὸ θεῖον τῷ κτιστῷ καὶ ἀκτίστῳ καταμερίζοντος.

44 Vgl. z.B. Eunomius, *Apologia* 11–12 (Vaggione 46,15–48,12).

45 Vgl. *CE* III 5,30–31 (GNO II 170 f.).

nämlich dem Geschaffenen die Gottheit, noch dem Ungeschaffenen der Charakter der Schöpfung zugeschrieben werden. Es sei denn, jemand erkläre in einem uneigentlichen Sinne eine Schöpfung für Gott—ähnlich wie man die Pferde manchmal mit den menschlichen Namen nennt, ohne sie dadurch zu Menschen zu machen.[46]

Eunomius versteht das Verhältnis zwischen dem „Ungezeugten" (ἀγέννητον) und dem „Gezeugten" (γεννητόν) als analog zu demjenigen zwischen dem „Gott, der über allem steht" (τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεόν), und dem „Sohn" oder dem „Gezeugten" (υἱὸν ἢ γεννητόν).[47] Er will damit den „Gott, der über allem steht", von dem gezeugten Sohn abheben (obwohl auch dieser als der Eingeborene Gott bezeichnet wird). Der Ungezeugte und der Eingeborene unterscheiden sich voneinander als zwei „Wesen", zugleich jedoch (wie wir schon aus der ersten *Apologia* des Eunomius schließen können) auch der Würde, der Ordnung und der Natur nach, wie sich auch der Paraklet vom Sohn unterscheidet.[48]

Gregor will dagegen die gleiche göttliche Natur (auch „Wesen", οὐσία genannt) dem Vater und dem Sohn zusprechen, und hält daher die Gleichsetzung des „Ungezeugten" mit dem „Gott, der über allem steht", für unangemessen, da dadurch die Gottheit des Sohnes gefährdet wird. Er versucht sogar zu beweisen, dass Eunomius durch seine perfide „Anastrophe" (gemeint ist die Gleichsetzung des „Ungezeugten" mit dem „Gott, der über allem steht") die Gottheit dem Ungezeugten reserviert und dadurch den Eingeborenen von der Gottheit ausschließt[49] (was jedoch Eunomius seiner ersten *Apologia* zufolge ausdrücklich *nicht* wollte).[50]

In Gregors Augen vernachlässigt Eunomius die Eigentümlichkeit (τὸ ἰδιάζον) des Sohnes, die ihn nicht nur deutlich von der Schöpfung trennt, sondern auch von allen anderen gezeugten Dingen unterscheidet.[51] Es gibt ja viele ande-

46 Vgl. *CE* III 5,27–28 (GNO II 169 f.). Gregor scheint hier nicht so sehr an die menschliche Teilnahme an der Gottheit, als vielmehr an eine unberechtigte Aneignung des göttlichen Titels durch die Kaiser zu denken. Basilius nennt dagegen das Beispiel, dass die Menschen der vollkommenen Tugend mit dem Titel „Gott" bezeichnet werden, als eine Widerlegung der These des Eunomius, der zufolge die mit dem gleichen Namen Bezeichneten auch das gleiche Wesen haben. Die Menschen müssten dann mit Gott ὁμοούσιοι sein, was offensichtlich absurd ist (vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4, SC 305, 22,40).

47 Vgl. *CE* III 5,34 (GNO II 172,18–21): μηδένα τῶν τῆς ἀληθείας πεφροντικότων οὔτε τῶν γεννητῶν οὐδὲν ὀνομάζειν ἀγέννητον οὔτε τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸν υἱὸν ἢ γεννητόν (ein Eunomius-Zitat).

48 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 66,5–10).

49 Vgl. *CE* III 5,35 (GNO II 172,22–173,4).

50 Eunomius, *Apologia* 21 (Vaggione 60,13–17).

51 Vgl. *CE* III 5,35–36 (GNO II 172 f.); ähnlich schon Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 10 (SC 305, 38).

ren gezeugten Wesen, so Gregor, wie die Hunde, Frosche usw., die mit dem Sohn schlecht verglichen werden können.[52] Dies wusste jedoch Eunomius selber allzu gut, wenn er die aus dem Nichts geschaffenen Dinge das Wesen des Sohnes nicht teilen ließ (οὐ κοινοποιοῦντες οὐδε τοῦ μονογενοῦς τὴν οὐσίαν πρὸς τὰ ἐκ μὴ ὄντων γενόμενα).[53] Der Sohn als Schöpfer hebt sich auch nach Eunomius wesentlich von dem ab, was durch ihn geschaffen wurde (vgl. *Joh* 1,3).[54]

Der Name „Ungezeugt" (oder „Nicht entstanden")[55] scheint dagegen für Eunomius seinen Träger in seinem Wesen selbst zu beschreiben,[56] da ja nach der „natürlichen Vorstellung" (κατά τε φυσικὴν ἔννοιαν) wie „nach der Lehre der Väter" Gott weder durch sich selbst noch durch einen anderen entstand (μήτε παρ' ἑαυτοῦ, μήτε παρ' ἑτέρου γενόμενος).[57] Dies trifft jedoch nach Gregor nicht zu, da nicht einmal der Name „Ungezeugt" („Nicht entstanden") ausschließlich dem Vater vorbehalten ist. Auch das Nichtexistierende kann nämlich als „ungezeugt" („nicht entstanden") bezeichnet werden, wie die völlig bedeutungslosen Namen (wie „Skindapsos" und „Blityri")[58] oder die nichtexistierenden Fabelwesen (wie Minotaur, Kyklop, Skylla oder Chimäre) beweisen.[59]

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52 Vgl. *CE* III 5,43 (GNO II 176,2 f.).

53 Eunomius, *Apologia* 15 (Vaggione 52,7 f.).

54 Eunomius, *Apologia* 15 (Vaggione 52,9–16). Zur schöpferischen Macht des Sohnes vgl. M. R. Barnes, „Eunomius of Cyzicus and Gregory of Nyssa: Two Traditions of Transcendent Causality", *VigChr* 52 (1998) 59–87, bes. 63–67.

55 Im vor- und frühchristlichen Griechischen bedeuten die Ausdrücke γεν[ν]ητός bzw. ἀγέν-[ν]ητος gezeugt-entstanden bzw. ungezeugt-nicht entstanden. Wenn man auch etymologisch zwischen γενητός = entstanden (von γί[γ]νεσθαι), und γεννητός = gezeugt (von γεννᾶσθαι) unterscheiden kann, werden beide Ausdrücke mehr oder weniger gleichbedeutend benutzt (vgl. P. Stiegele, *Der Agennesiebegriff in der griechischen Theologie des vierten Jahrhunderts. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der trinitarischen Terminologie*, Freiburg i. B. 1913, 1–24). Erst während der arianischen Polemik beginnt man zwischen γενητός (entstanden, d.h. geschaffen) und γεννητός (gezeugt) bzw. zwischen ἀγένητος (nicht entstanden, d.h. nicht geschaffen) und ἀγέννητος (ungezeugt) zu unterscheiden (vgl. Stiegele, *Der Agennesiebegriff*; G. L. Prestige, „Ἀγέν[ν]ητος and Cognate Words in Athanasius", *JThS* 34 (1933) 258–265; Th. A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, Patristic Monograph Series 8, Philadelphia 1979, I, 242–266).

56 Eunomius, *Apologia* 8 (Vaggione 40,1–42,18).

57 Eunomius, *Apologia* 7 (Vaggione 40,1–3).

58 Σκινδαψός und βλίτυρι gelten als traditionelle Beispiele der sinnlosen Wörter (vgl. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* VIII 133; für βλίτυρι auch Diogenes Laertius, VII 57,5 f.). Trotzdem kann σκινδαψός auch ein musikalisches Instrument oder einen dem Efeu ähnlichen Baum bedeuten (vgl. W. Pape, *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache,* Bd. II, Braunschweig 1906³, 899).

59 Vgl. *CE* III 5,43–44 (GNO II 176,3–9).

Schon deswegen ist es für Gregor völlig ausgeschlossen, dass die Namen „Gezeugt" und „Ungezeugt", die eine so große Bedeutungsunterschiedlichkeit zulassen, das Wesen zeigen sollen. Wollte man schon die Natur in den Benennungen ausgedrückt suchen, wäre es ja viel angemessener, von den Ehrennamen auszugehen, die der Sohn mit dem Vater ohne jeden Bedeutungsunterschied teilt: „der Gute", „der Gerechte", „der Unsterbliche", „der Weise" usw.[60]

Diesen Einwand hat Eunomius selber vorweggenommen, als er schon in seiner ersten *Apologia* ausführte, dass die Benennungen wie „Licht", „Leben" und „Macht" gerade *nicht* ohne einen Bedeutungsunterschied von dem Unerzeugten und dem Erzeugten ausgesagt werden. Einer ist nämlich ein unerzeugtes, der andere ein erzeugtes Licht, was nach Eunomius' Vorstellung eben nicht das gleiche sein kann.[61]

Wodurch sich nach Gregor der Sohn als Gezeugter und der Vater als Ungezeugter unterscheiden, wird in unserem Passus nicht näher erklärt. Wir erfahren nur, dass es keineswegs die ungeschaffene Gottheit sein kann, die Gregor als das gemeinsame Wesen begreifen will.

5 Basilius' Beispiel der Eigennamen (*CE* III 5,19–25)

Die Argumentation Gregors ist auch dadurch interessant, dass er eine andere Strategie als sein verstorbener Bruder gewählt hat. Statt die Regel seines Gegners für die Begründung seiner eigenen Lehre zu benutzen, wollte nämlich Basilius in der durch Eunomius angegriffenen Passage zeigen, dass der Grundsatz des Eunomius *nicht* gilt.[62] Dies beweist er am Beispiel der Eigennamen, das Gregor in unserer Passage zitiert:

> Welcher vernünftige Mensch könnte der Meinung zustimmen, dass diejenigen Dinge, die unterschiedliche Namen (τὰ ὀνόματα) tragen, auch in ihren Wesen unterschiedlich sind? Petrus und Paulus und überhaupt alle Menschen haben ja unterschiedliche Namen (προσηγορίαι), obwohl das Wesen ihrer aller nur eins ist. Deswegen sind wir in der Mehrheit (der Aspekte) einander gleich, einer wird von dem anderen nur durch

60 *CE* III 5,43 (GNO II 175,24–29). Vgl. auch *CE* III 5,33 (GNO II 172,3–13).

61 Eunomius, *Apologia* 19 (Vaggione 56,1–58,23).

62 Auf diese Änderung der Strategie macht auch J. Zachhuber (*Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, SVigChr 46, Leiden 2000, 102 f.) aufmerksam.

> die Eigenschaften unterschieden, die an einem jeden zu beobachten sind (τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώμασι μόνοις τοῖς περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις). Daraus ergibt sich, dass durch die Namen (προσηγορίαι) nicht die Wesen, sondern die Eigenschaften bezeichnet werden, die einen jeden charakterisieren (τῶν ἰδιοτήτων, αἳ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν). Wenn wir „Petrus" hören, verstehen wir aus diesem Namen (ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος) nicht sein Wesen—mit dem „Wesen" meine ich jetzt das materielle Substrat (τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον), das keineswegs durch den Namen bezeichnet wird—, sondern es prägt sich uns damit eine Vorstellung der Eigenschaften ein, die an ihm zu beobachten sind (τῶν ἰδιωμάτων τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν θεωρουμένων τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐντυπούμεθα).[63]

Die Eigennamen (promiscue ὀνόματα und προσηγορίαι genannt),[64] so Basilius, zeigen keineswegs das Wesen, da das Wesen bei allen Menschen nur *eins* ist (οὐσία δὲ πάντων μία), während die Eigennamen unterschiedlich sind. Die Eigennamen bringen nicht das Gemeinsame, sondern das individuell Charakteristische zum Ausdruck, jedoch auch nicht das individuelle Wesen im Sinne der aristotelischen ersten οὐσία (οὐσία wird hier, so Basilius, als das „materielle Substrat" begriffen). Mit dem Namen „Petrus" sind für uns vielmehr die diesen Mann charakterisierenden Umstände oder Eigenschaften verbunden (τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώμασι μόνοις τοῖς περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις oder τῶν ἰδιοτήτων, αἳ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν), und zwar in eine Vorstellung (ἔννοια) vereint, die

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63 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 18,1–20,13): Καίτοι τίς ἂν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ σωφρονῶν πρόσθοιτο, ὅτι ὧν τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστι διάφορα, τούτων παρηλλάχθαι καὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἀνάγκη; Πέτρου γὰρ καὶ Παύλου, καὶ ἁπαξαπλῶς ἀνθρώπων πάντων προσηγορίαι μὲν διάφοροι, οὐσία δὲ πάντων μία. Διόπερ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐσμέν· τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώμασι μόνοις τοῖς περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις ἕτερος ἑτέρου διενηνόχαμεν. Ὅθεν καὶ αἱ προσηγορίαι οὐχὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσι σημαντικαί, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιοτήτων, αἳ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν. Ὅταν οὖν ἀκούωμεν Πέτρον, οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ νοοῦμεν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος (οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον, ὅπερ οὐδαμῶς σημαίνει τοὔνομα), ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ἃ περὶ αὐτὸν θεωρεῖται τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐντυπούμεθα. Der Text des Basilius unterscheidet sich von dem Zitat bei Gregor (*CE* III 5,21–22: GNO II 167 f.) durch die Erklärung der οὐσία in Klammern. Wo bei Basilius: οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον, ὅπερ οὐδαμῶς σημαίνει τοὔνομα steht, finden wir bei Gregor (*CE* III 5,22, GNO II 168,1 f.): οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν οὐ τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον. Zu diesem Unterschied vgl. unten, S. 366.

64 Die Stoiker (nach Diogenes Laertius, VII 57 = SVF II 147) und auch die alexandrinischen Grammatiker (vgl. Dionysius Thrax, *Ars gramm.*, Uhlig 12,33,6–34,2) unterscheiden als προσηγορία das Appellativum und ὄνομα als den Eigennamen. Nach A. Choufrine („The Development of St. Basil's Idea of Hypostasis", *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano* 7 (2003), 7–27, hier 21 f.) richtet sich auch Basilius in unserer Passage nach dieser Unterscheidung.

uns durch den Namen eingeprägt wird. Was nach Basilius (in der Fortsetzung unserer Passage) die Namen zum Ausdruck bringen, ist damit nicht die οὐσία („als ὑπόστασις verstanden"), sondern eine Charakteristik (τὸν χαρακτῆρα) des Betreffenden,[65] d.h. ein „Zusammenlaufen seiner charakteristischen Eigenschaften" (ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομή).[66]

Dieses Zusammenlaufen ist ein jeweils anderes für die einzelnen Menschen, wenn einige der Eigenschaften auch gemeinsam sind und ihre durch den Namen eingeprägte Zusammensetzung bei unterschiedlichen Zuhörern auch individuell sein mag. Wenn wir z.B. „Petrus" hören, denken wir an den Mann, der „ein Sohn des Jonas" (*Matth* 16,17), „aus Bethsaida" (*Joh* 1,44), „ein Bruder des Andreas" war (*Matth* 4,18), der „aus dem Fischermannsmilieu zum Apostolat berufen" (*Matth* 4,18–21) und „dem dank seinem starken Glauben das Aufbauen der Kirche anvertraut" wurde (*Matth* 16,16–18).[67] Der Name „Paulus" prägt uns eine andere Zusammensetzung der charakteristischen Eigenschaften ein: jemand, der „aus Tarsus" (*Apg* 22,3), „ein Jude", „ein Pharisäer nach dem Gesetz" (*Phil* 3,5), „ein Schüler des Gamaliel" (*Apg* 22,3) war, „der die Kirchen Gottes eifrig verfolgte" (*Phil* 3,6), „der durch eine fürchterliche Vision zur Erkenntnis gebracht" (*Apg* 9,3–6; 22,6–8; 26,12–19) und zum „Heidenapostel" (*Röm* 11,13) wurde.[68]

Diese Theorie von der Semantik der Eigennamen,[69] die ihnen eindeutig eine Konnotation, d.h. einen deskriptiven Inhalt (nicht nur, und sogar nicht notwendig, eine Denotation, d.h. einen Hinweis auf einen konkreten Träger) zuschreibt, scheint der stoischen Vorstellung nahezukommen.[70] Jedoch im

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65 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,18 f.): ὧν οὐδέν ἐστιν οὐσία, ὡς ἡ ὑπόστασις νοουμένη. Ὥστε τὸ ὄνομα τὸν χαρακτῆρα μὲν ἡμῖν ἀφορίζει τὸν Πέτρου.

66 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,20 f.): Πάλιν ἀκούσαντες Παῦλον, ἑτέρων ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομὴν ἐνοήσαμεν.

67 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,13–17): Εὐθὺς γὰρ ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης νοοῦμεν τὸν τοῦ Ἰωνᾶ, τὸν ἐκ τῆς Βηθσαϊδᾶ, τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἀνδρέου, τὸν ἀπὸ ἁλιέων εἰς τὴν διακονίαν τῆς ἀποστολῆς προσκληθέντα, τὸν διὰ πίστεως ὑπεροχὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δεξάμενον.

68 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,20–25): Πάλιν ἀκούσαντες Παῦλον, ἑτέρων ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομὴν ἐνοήσαμεν· τὸν Ταρσέα, τὸν Ἑβραῖον, τὸν κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖον, τὸν μαθητὴν Γαμαλιὴλ, τὸν κατὰ ζῆλον διώκτην τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν ἐκ τῆς φοβερᾶς ὀπτασίας εἰς τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν ἐναχθέντα, τὸν ἀπόστολον τῶν ἐθνῶν.

69 Zu Basilius' Auffassung der Eigennamen vgl. D. G. Robertson, „A Patristic Theory of Proper Names", *AGPh* 84 (2002) 1–19, und besonders P. Kalligas, „Basil of Caesarea on the Semantics of Proper Names", in: K. Ierodiakonou (Hrsg.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, Oxford 2002, 31–48; M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, Leiden 2010, 190–211.

70 Zur stoischen Theorie des Eigennamens vgl. A. C. Lloyd, „Grammar and Metaphysics in the Stoa", in: A. A. Long (Hrsg.), *Problems in Stoicism*, London 1971, 58–74, bes. 66;

Unterschied zur Theorie der Stoa[71] (und des Origenes!)[72] evozieren die Eigennamen nach Basilius nicht nur *eine* unwiederholbare Eigenschaft, die das Einzelne zum Einzelnen macht,[73] sondern eine *Zusammensetzung* der charakteristischen Eigenschaften, die keineswegs vollständig sein kann und muss. Damit entgeht Basilius sehr elegant dem Theon-Paradox der Stoiker (der einbeinige Theon hört auf zu sein, falls auch Dion ein Bein verliert)[74] und ebenfalls der Frage, was für eine Referenz diejenigen Eigennamen haben, die sich auf ein nicht-existierendes Subjekt beziehen („Dion ist tot"[75] oder „Pegasus hat Flügel"). Auf eine fast „nominalistische" Weise löst nämlich Basilius die Semantik der Eigennamen von der Ontologie. Die Namen bringen nämlich nicht notwendig *die* Eigenschaft oder *die* Zusammensetzung der charakteristischen Eigenschaften zum Ausdruck, die den Einzelnen in seiner Individualität konstituiert, sondern eine Zusammensetzung eher zufälliger Charakteristiken, die dem Zuhörer bekannt sind.

Die Vorstellung des „Zusammenlaufens" der Eigenschaften erinnert dabei deutlich an Porphyrius—für den ein „Zusammenlaufen der Qualitäten" (ἰδιότητι δὲ συνδρομῆς ποιοτήτων[76] oder ἰδιοτήτων τὸ ἄθροισμα)[77] die ontologische

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J. Brunschwig, „Remarques sur la théorie stoïcienne du nom propre", *Études sur les philosophies hellénistiques: épicurisme, stoïcisme, scepticisme*, Paris 1995, 115–139.

71 Vgl. Alexander von Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis analyticorum priorum* (CAG II/1 179,11): . . . τὸ Δίων ὄνομά ἐστι τοῦ ἰδίως ποιοῦ. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis categorias* (CAG VIII 35,34): τὸ γὰρ κύριον [ὄνομα] τὸ ἰδίως ποιὸν δηλοῖ τοῦ καλουμένου.

72 Vgl. Origenes, *De oratione* 24,2 (Koetschau 353,21–353,3): „ὄνομα" τοίνυν ἐστὶ κεφαλαιώδης προσηγορία τῆς ἰδίας ποιότητος τοῦ ὀνομαζομένου παραστατική· οἷόν ἐστι τὶς ἰδία ποιότης Παύλου τοῦ ἀποστόλου, ἡ μέν τις τῆς ψυχῆς, καθ' ἣν τοιάδε ἐστὶν, ἡ δέ τις τοῦ νοῦ, καθ' ἣν τοιῶνδέ ἐστι θεωρητικὸς, ἡ δέ τις τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, καθ' ἣν τοιόνδε ἐστί. τὸ τοίνυν τούτων τῶν ποιοτήτων ἴδιον καὶ ἀσυντρόχαστον πρὸς ἕτερον (ἄλλος γάρ τις ἀπαράλλακτος Παύλου ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν οὐκ ἔστι) δηλοῦται διὰ τῆς „Παῦλος" ὀνομασίας.

73 Zur stoischen Theorie der persönlichen Identität, die die individuelle Qualität verantwortet, vgl. D. Sedley, „The Stoic Criterion of Identity", *Phron.* 27 (1982) 255–275.

74 Vgl. Philon von Alexandrien, *De aeternitate mundi* 48–49 (SVF II 397). Zu diesem Paradox, das wahrscheinlich im Kontext des „Wachsenden Arguments" zu lesen ist (nach dem jeder Mensch eine Serie von Individuen darstellt, da sich sein Substrat ständig ändert), vgl. D. Sedley, „The Stoic Criterion", 267–270; A. A. Long – D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Cambridge 1987, I, 175 f.

75 Vgl. Alexander von Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis analyticorum priorum* (CAG II/1 177,25–178, 8 = SVF II 202a). S. dazu A. C. Lloyd, „Grammar and Metaphysics", 69; M. Mignucci, „Sur la logique modale des Stoïciens", in: J. Brunschwig (ed.), *Les Stoïciens et leur logique. Actes du Colloque de Chantilly 18–22 septembre 1976*, Paris 1978, 317–346, hier 322 f.

76 Vgl. Porphyrius, *In Aristotelis categorias* (CAG IV/1 129,9).

77 Vgl. Porphyrius, *Isagoge* (CAG IV/1, 7,19–24). Zum ἄθροισμα (Versammlug) vgl. Platon, *Theaetetus* 157b8–c2; Alkinoos, *Didascalicus* IV 156,3–14 (Whittaker 7); vgl. jedoch auch

Konstitution des Einzelnen leistet—oder an die Skeptiker, die ein „Zusammenlaufen der Vorstellungen" (τῇ συνδρομῇ τῶν φαντασιῶν) im Urteil voraussetzen: z.B. wird die Vorstellung von einem Menschen immer von den Vorstellungen „um ihn" (τῶν περὶ αὐτόν), wie Farbe, Größe, Gestalt, Bewegung, Rede, Kleidung und Schuhe, und von den Außenumständen (τῶν ἐκτός), wie Licht, Tag, Freunde usw., begleitet. Wir erkennen Sokrates, so Sextus in seinem Referat über Karneades, aufgrund eines „Zusammenlaufens der Vorstellungen", wo wir feststellen, dass er seine „üblichen Charakteristiken" (τὰ εἰωθότα) besitzt, genauso wie die Ärzte aufgrund eines Zusammenlaufens mehrerer Symptome eine Krankheit diagnostizieren.[78]

Keiner der uns bekannten Vorgänger des Basilius hat jedoch das Zusammenlaufen der Eigenschaften für die Semantik der Eigennamen benutzt.[79]

Die Frage der Eigennamen ist in unserem Kontext deswegen interessant, weil Basilius in seiner Polemik auch die Bezeichnungen „Ungezeugt" und „Gezeugt" als eine Art Eigennamen behandelt. In seiner Theologie verlässt er zwar die materialistische stoische Ontologie, er behält jedoch die Vorstellung der charakteristischen Eigenschaften (in diesem Falle wohl nicht ihres Zusammenlaufens), die das gemeinsame Wesen in die Einzelhypostasen differenzieren, bei. Wie wir jedoch schon im Fall der Eigennamen gesehen haben, behauptete Basilius nicht, dass sie gerade *die* Eigenschaft oder *das* Zusammenlaufen der Eigenschaften in unserer Vorstellung hervorrufen, wodurch die Einzelwesen in ihrer Identität konstituiert werden. Auf eine ähnliche Weise ist Basilius vorsichtig, wenn er die Eigenschaften erörtert, die uns in der Gottheit Vater und Sohn unterscheiden lassen. Auch hier wird eine Reserviertheit spürbar, die Basilius eher von *unserer Erkenntnis* der göttlichen Hypostasen als von ihrer Konstitution selbst sprechen lässt.

Die Bezeichnungen „ungezeugt" und „gezeugt" sind für Basilius vor allem die distinktiven Eigenschaften, die man am Wesen einsieht (γνωριστικάς τινας ἰδιότητας ἐπιθεωρουμένας τῇ οὐσίᾳ) und dank derer man den Vater von dem Sohn unterscheiden kann.[80] In diesem Sinne bringen die Namen „Vater" und „Sohn" die distinktiven Eigenschaften zum Ausdruck (τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ἐστὶ δηλωτικά),[81] die als einmalige Charakteristiken das gemeinsame Wesen differenzieren, ohne es jedoch aufzubrechen. Die gemeinsame Gottheit wird

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Cratylus 432b4–c6. Dexippus stellt sich gegen die Position, dass es ein „Zusammenlaufen der Qualitäten (ἡ συνδρομὴ τῶν ποιοτήτων) wäre, was ein Einzelnes von einem anderen unterscheidet (*In Aristotelis categorias*, CAG IV/2 30,23–28).

78 Vgl. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* VII 176–179.

79 So P. Kalligas, „Basil of Caesarea", 46.

80 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 28 (SC 305, 118,27 f.).

81 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 5 (SC 305, 22,1–3).

mit den Eigenschaften der Vaterschaft und der Sohnschaft verbunden, und damit entsteht in unserer Erkenntnis die wahre Vorstellung (ἡ κατάληψις τῆς ἀληθείας).[82] Die Eigenschaften zeigen (δεικνύναι) daher das Unterschiedliche und bewahren zugleich das identische Wesen,[83] das als ein Substrat diesen Eigenschaften zugrunde liegt.[84]

Dieser Auffassung der Eigennamen, wie sie Basilius vertritt, hält Eunomius, so Gregor, ein „Lob" derjenigen Wörter entgegen, „die das Substrat (der Bezeichnungen) durch ein Offenbarmachen bezeichnen" (λόγων τῶν σημαντικῶν τὸ ὑποκείμενον φανερούντων)".[85] Eunomius reagierte damit wahrscheinlich auf die Theorie des Basilius, dass die Namen eben nicht das Substrat (was im stoischen Sinne auch unsinnig wäre), sondern die individualisierenden Eigenschaften bezeichnen. Diese Vorstellung scheint Basilius nicht nur für die Eigennamen, sondern auch für die Appellativa zu vertreten.[86] Dieser Auffassung wollte Eunomius wohl ein Konzept gegenüberstellen, nach dem die Eigennamen eben nicht die (akzidentellen) Eigenschaften, sondern das (individuelle) Subjekt (das aristotelische erste Wesen) als ihren Träger denotativ, nicht konnotativ bezeichnen.[87] Damit stellt sich Eunomius in die aristotelisierende Linie der alexandrinischen Grammatiker, nach denen die Namen die *Wesen* bezeichnen, seien es die ersten Wesen, auf die sich die Eigennamen

82 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 28 (SC 305, 118,30–120,37). Ähnlich auch *Adversus Eunomium* II 28 (SC 305, 122,10–13): Μιᾶς γὰρ οὔσης θεότητος, ἀμήχανον ἰδιάζουσαν ἔννοιαν Πατρὸς λαβεῖν ἢ Υἱοῦ, μὴ τῇ τῶν ἰδιωμάτων προσθήκῃ τῆς διανοίας διαρθρουμένης.

83 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 28 (SC 305, 120,43 f.): Αὕτη γὰρ τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ἡ φύσις, ἐν τῇ τῆς οὐσίας ταυτότητι δεικνύναι τὴν ἑτερότητα.

84 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 28 (SC 305, 120,48–50): Μιᾶς γὰρ οὐσίας τοῖς πᾶσιν ὑποκειμένης, τὰ ἰδιώματα ταῦτα οὐκ ἀλλοτριοῖ τὴν οὐσίαν.

85 *CE* III 5,24 (GNO II 168,11 f.).

86 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 9 (SC 305, 38,24–27), wo Basilius von den nichtrelativen Namen sagt: καὶ τὰ ἀπολελυμένα τῶν ὀνομάτων, κἂν τὰ μάλιστα δοκῇ ὑποκείμενόν τι δηλοῦν, οὐκ αὐτὴν παρίστησι τὴν οὐσίαν, ἰδιώματα δέ τινα περὶ αὐτὴν ἀφορίζει. Die Vorstellung, dass die Eigennamen die eigene Qualität, während die Appellativa die gemeinsame Qualität zum Ausdruck bringen, ist z.B. bei Diogenes von Babylon zu finden, vgl. Diogenes Laertius, VII 58: Ἔστι δὲ προσηγορία μὲν κατὰ τὸν Διογένην μέρος λόγου σημαῖνον κοινὴν ποιότητα, οἷον Ἄνθρωπος, Ἵππος· ὄνομα δέ ἐστι μέρος λόγου δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα, οἷον Διογένης, Σωκράτης. S. dazu M. E. Reesor, „The Stoic Concept of Quality", *American Journal of Philology* 75 (1954) 40–58, bes. 52; A. C. Lloyd, „Grammar and Metaphysics", 66.

87 Schon in seiner ersten *Apologia* meinte Eunomius, man müsse sich auf „die Begriffe der Subjekte" (ταῖς δὲ τῶν ὑποκειμένων ἐννοίαις) konzentrieren, denen sich die Namen anpassen (*Apologia* 18, SC 305, 268,7 f.), und hob hervor, dass der Name die Hypostase selbst bedeutet, und die Aussage das Wesen bezeugt (αὐτὴν εἶναι τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἣν σημαίνει τοὔνομα, ἐπαληθευούσης τῇ οὐσίᾳ τῆς προσηγορίας) (*Apologia* 12, SC 305, 258,10–12).

(ὀνόματα) beziehen, oder die zweiten Wesen, die mit den Appellativa (προσηγορίαι) zum Ausdruck gebracht werden.[88]

Gregor deutet in seinem blumenreichen Schimpfen leider wenig vom Inhalt der Polemik an, in der

> der arme Isokrates wieder einmal abgenagt wird, damit aus ihm die Phrasen und Figuren ausgerissen werden, die sich für diese Kompilation eignen. Ähnlich geht es manchmal auch dem Hebräer Philon, der ein in seinen Werken zusammengestelltes Arsenal der Wörtlein bietet.[89]

Hat Eunomius dem Isokrates und dem Philon Beispiele für seine Theorie der Eigennamen entnommen? Dies ist schwierig zu erraten. Die Reden des Isokrates waren sicher eine Pflichtlektüre des antiken Rhetors (auch die expressiven Ausdrücke, derer sich Gregor bedient, zeigen, dass es nichts Überraschendes war, Isokrates zu lesen), für eine Theorie der Eigennamen scheint er jedoch wenig zu bieten.[90] Philon, der den meisten griechischen Vätern (direkt oder durch Origenes) bekannt war,[91] hat sich dagegen für die alttestamentlichen Eigennamen und ihre Bedeutung außerordentlich interessiert, ihrer Semantik hat er z.B. einen Passus in *De mutatione nominum* (60–122) gewidmet. Dass

88 Vgl. Dionysius Thrax, *Ars grammatica*, Uhlig 12,33,6–34,2: Κύριον μὲν οὖν ἐστι τὸ τὴν ἰδίαν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον Ὅμηρος Σωκράτης. Προσηγορικὸν δέ ἐστι τὸ τὴν κοινὴν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον ἄνθρωπος ἵππος. S. dazu P. Kalligas, „Basil of Caesarea", 38 f. Aristoteles selber scheint zwar die Eigennamen als eine Gruppe der Namen zu verstehen (vgl. *De int.* 7, 17a38–b1), ohne jedoch in seinen *Analytiken* zwischen dem „Eigennamen" und dem „Begriffswort" klar zu unterscheiden (wie G. Frege), vgl. J. Barnes, „Grammar on Aristotle's Terms", in: M. Frede – G. Striker (Hrsg.), *Rationality in Greek Thought*, Oxford 1996, 175–202. Er sagt jedoch klar genug, dass der Name (im Sinne des Appellativums) und die Definition von dem Träger ausgesagt werden: τῶν καθ' ὑποκειμένου λεγομένων ἀναγκαῖον καὶ τοὔνομα καὶ τὸν λόγον κατηγορεῖσθαι τοῦ ὑποκειμένου (Aristoteles, *Categoriae* 5, 2a19–21).

89 *CE* III 5,24 (GNO II 168,15–18): καὶ πάλιν ὁ τλήμων Ἰσοκράτης περιεσθίεται ῥήματά τε καὶ σχήματα πρὸς τὴν σύνθεσιν τοῦ προκειμένου παρατιλλόμενος, ἔστι δὲ ὅπου καὶ ὁ Ἑβραῖος Φίλων τὰ ἴσα πάσχει, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων πόνων συνερανίζων αὐτῷ τὰ λεξείδια. Zum rhetorischen Arsenal, das Gregor selbst in dieser Passage aus der klassischen Parodie schöpft, vgl. M. Cassin, „‚Plumer Isocrate': usage polémique du vocabulaire comique chez Grégoire de Nysse", *Revue des études grecques* 121 (2008) 783–796.

90 Die einzige Erwähnung, die ich finden konnte, ist im Nekrolog des salaminischen Imperators Evagoras, der seine zahlreichen Kinder nicht mit den Eigennamen (ἰδιωτικοῖς ὀνόμασι), sondern mit den Ehrentiteln „König", „Prinzen" und „Prinzessinnen" ansprechen ließ (vgl. Isokrates, *Evagoras* (*orat. 9*) 72, Mathieu – Brémond II, 165).

91 Vgl. D. T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*, Assen 1993.

er für Eunomius eine Quelle war,[92] mag nur deswegen überraschen, weil sich Philon, wahrscheinlich anders als Eunomius, eher mit der konnotativen Semantik, manchmal sogar mit einer mystischen Symbolik der einzelnen Namen als mit ihrer Denotation beschäftigte (obwohl er die Frage, was der Eigenname ist, als einen Teil der Philosophie kannte).[93] Oder stützte sich vielleicht Eunomius auf Philons spöttische Wiedergabe des Theon-Paradoxes, die als eine Waffe gegen die stoische Vorstellung einer für das Individuelle kennzeichnenden Qualität benutzt werden könnte?[94]

Was genau Eunomius von diesen Autoren für sein „reich besticktes und vielfarbiges Wortgewebe“[95] übernommen hat, müssen wir leider offen lassen. Ebenso unklar bleibt, wie Gregor selber die Eigennamen verstand, weil er in seiner rhetorischen Empörung leider nicht dazu kommt, sich zu der Frage zu äußern. Das einzige, was wir in einem anderen Zusammenhang von ihm erfahren, ist die Auskunft, dass die Änderung der Eigennamen (z.B. des Petrus, vgl. *Mk* 3,16) das Wesen des Genannten nicht ändern kann.[96] Dies lässt ahnen, dass Gregor den konnotativen Inhalt der Eigennamen viel weniger schätzt als sein Bruder (oder als Philon in *De mutatione nominum*). Wie Eunomius verbindet er wahrscheinlich mit dem Namen eher eine denotative Funktion: Die Namen „Simon“ und „Petrus“ scheinen ohne jeden interessanten Unterschied vor allem ihren Träger zu zeigen, für den sie wahrscheinlich keine wesentliche Änderung bedeuten.

6 Die Doppelaussage der göttlichen Namen (*CE* III 5,50–60)

Der Vergleich der Benennungen „Gezeugt“ und „Ungezeugt“ mit den Eigennamen ist in den Augen des Eunomius schon deswegen ungeeignet, weil die

92 Nach J. Daniélou („Philon et Grégoire de Nysse“, in: *Philon d'Alexandrie: Lyon 11–15 Septembre 1966*, Paris 1967, 333–345, hier 333 f.) soll Gregor in unserem Passus *den Stil* der beiden Autoren verglichen haben (was jedoch nicht genau stimmt, vgl. D. T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 244 f.), in *CE* III 7,8 (GNO II 217,18–21) dagegen auch den Inhalt ihrer Schriften (die Transzendenz Gottes über alles Erzeugte). Zu Gregors Vergleich zwischen Eunomius und Philon in der Auffassung der göttlichen Macht vgl. auch M. R. Barnes, „Eunomius“, 71 f.

93 Vgl. Philon, *De congressu* 149,1 f. (Wendland III): ταύτης (φιλοσοφίας) γὰρ ἴδιον ἐξετάζειν, τί σύνδεσμος, τί ὄνομα, τί ῥῆμα, τί κοινὸν ὄνομα, τί ἴδιον …

94 Vgl. Philon von Alexandrien, *De aeternitate mundi* 48–49 (SVF II 397). S. dazu oben, S. 349 mit der Anm. 74.

95 *CE* III 5,25 (GNO II 168,19 f.): τὸ πολυκέντητον τοῦτο καὶ πολύχρωμον τῶν λόγων ἐξύφασμα.

96 *CE* III 5,50–52 (GNO II 178 f.).

Eigennamen durch die Menschen gegeben und daher auch geändert werden können.[97] Die Bezeichnungen der Dinge haben dagegen „ein naturhaftes Verhältnis zu den Dingen", das „unveränderlich" erscheint (ἀμετάθετος ἡ προσφυὴς τῶν ὀνομάτων πρὸς τὰ πράγματα σχέσις).[98]

Diese Auffassung der Sprache hat Gregor schon im zweiten Buch seiner Polemik bekämpft.[99] Er kann daher nur knapp zusammenfassen, dass alle Bezeichnungen der Dinge, nicht nur die Eigennamen, von den Menschen eingeführt wurden, und dass sie tatsächlich auch veränderlich sind, oder mindestens bei unterschiedlichen Völkern unterschiedlich klingen.[100]

Auch die Bezeichnungen „gezeugt" und „ungezeugt" sind in dem Sinne veränderlich, dass ihre Bedeutung anders ausgedrückt werden könnte, ohne dass dadurch unsere Idee oder sogar das Bezeichnete selbst geändert würde. Anstatt „der Ungezeugte" könnte man ja „die erste Ursache", „der Vater des Eingeborenen" oder „derjenige, der durch keine Ursache existiert" sagen, was alles von den Menschen eingeführte Namen sind, die auch geändert werden können.[101]

Wir kennen ja, so Gregor, keinen Namen, der die Natur Gottes auf eine angemessene Weise ausdrücken kann.[102] Die Heilige Schrift selbst bezeugt, dass weder Abraham noch Mose einen solchen Namen erfahren durften (*Ex* 6,3; 3,6.13 f.), da Gott von keinem Menschen gesehen werden kann (*Ex* 33,20; *Joh* 1,18; *1 Tim* 6,16). Wer die unbegrenzte göttliche Natur mit einem Begriff aussagen möchte, ist wie jemand, der das ganze Meer mit seiner Hand fassen will.[103]

Die Namen, mit denen wir die Gottheit nennen, beinhalten nach Gregor eigentlich zwei Aussagen. Einerseits diejenige von ihrem Wirken oder ihrer Tätigkeit (ἐνέργεια), andererseits—manchmal implizit—diejenige von ihrer Existenz (τοῦ ἐστί). Wenn die Heilige Schrift z.B. sagt, dass Gott ein Richter ist

97 *CE* III 5,50 (GNO II 178,13–15). Diesen Umstand beobachtete auch Origenes, der ihn mit der Veränderlichkeit aller Dinge—nur Gott ausgenommen—verband, vgl. *De oratione* 24,2 (Koetschau 354,3–11).

98 Vgl. *CE* III 5,32 (GNO II 171,22–24): ein Eunomius-Zitat.

99 Mit dem Passus habe ich mich an anderer Stelle beschäftigt, vgl. „Der Ursprung der Sprache nach Eunomius und Gregor vor dem Hintergrund der antiken Sprachtheorien (Contra Eunomium, II 387–444; 543–553)", in: L. Karfíková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (Hrsg.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies* (*Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa, Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004*), SVigChr 82, Leiden, Boston 2007, 279–305.

100 Vgl. *CE* III 5,50–52 (GNO II 178 f.).

101 Vgl. *CE* III 5,52–53 (GNO II 179).

102 Vgl. *CE* III 5,53–54 (GNO II 179).

103 Vgl. *CE* III 5,55 (GNO II 180).

(*Ps* 7,12), dann bedeutet das einerseits, dass er die Tätigkeit des Richters ausübt, andererseits, dass er ist.[104] Ohne die (manchmal implizite) Aussage der Existenz wären die Gottesnamen leer, da sie keinen Träger hätten.[105]

Keine der beiden Aussagen zeigt jedoch das Wesen selbst. Die Namen der Tätigkeiten Gottes lassen nur „etwas um das Wesen herum sehen" (τι τῶν περὶ αὐτὴν θεωρουμένων);[106] die Aussage der Existenz versichert uns zwar, dass die Gottheit ist, lässt jedoch auch unklar, *was* sie ist. Selbst die Heilige Schrift sagt von „demjenigen, der ist" (*Ex* 3,14),[107] nicht sein Wesen aus, das durch keine Aussage gefasst werden kann[108] (sondern nur seine Existenz).

Genauso beinhaltet auch die Bezeichnung „ungezeugt" zwei Aussagen, nämlich einerseits die Affirmation der Existenz (*dass* ihr Träger ist), andererseits einen der Aspekte, die „um das Seiende herum gesehen werden können" (ἓν τῶν ἐπιθεωρουμένων ἐστὶ τῷ ὄντι). Keine dieser Aussagen zeigt jedoch das Wesen selbst (οὐσία). Die Aussage des Seins (τοῦ εἶναι), d.h. der οὐσία, ist ja zu unterscheiden von derjenigen der Seinsweise (τοῦ πως εἶναι), z.B. „ungezeugt" (wie schon Basilius erörtert hat).[109]

In diesen Ausführungen des Gregors ist nicht nur seine Überzeugung von der Unfassbarkeit des göttlichen Wesens, sondern auch seine Vorstellung von der doppelten Aussage des Namens sehr interessant. Im Unterschied zu seinem Bruder findet nämlich Gregor in den Namen (hier jedoch nicht in den Eigennamen, sondern in den göttlichen Namen) nicht nur die Aussage der Eigenschaften, sondern sehr deutlich auch die Aussage des Seins, nämlich einen Hinweis zum Träger. Er scheint daher die Namen nicht nur konnotativ (wie Basilius), sondern zugleich auch denotativ (wie Eunomius) zu verstehen.

> Wenn wir sagen, dass dieser gezeugt oder nicht gezeugt ist, bringen wir damit ein Doppeltes zum Ausdruck: das Demostrativum bezieht sich auf

104 Vgl. *CE* III 5,58 (GNO II 181,13–16).

105 Vgl. *CE* III 5,57 (GNO II 180,24–181,13).

106 Vgl. *CE* III 5,59 (GNO II 181,23).

107 Der Name aus *Ex* 3,14 gilt als der wahre Gottesname für Origenes, *De oratione* 24,2 (Koetschau 354,8–11).

108 Vgl. *CE* III 5,59 (GNO II 181,21–182,4).

109 *CE* III 5,60 (GNO II 182,10–14). Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* I 15 (SC 299, 224–226). Mit dieser Unterscheidung habe ich mich anderswo befasst, vgl. L. Karfíková, *„Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei"*, in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism, Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008)*, SVigChr 106, Leiden, Boston 2011, 131–168, 157–165.

> den Träger (τὸ ὑποκείμενον), „gezeugt“ oder „nicht gezeugt“ gibt kund, was an ihm zu beobachten ist (τὸ τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ προσθεωρούμενον).[110]
>
> Wenn wir z.B. sagen, dass (Gott) ein Richter ist, dann verstehen wir das Richten als eine Tätigkeit (ἐνέργειάν τινα), die auf ihn bezogen wird, „ist“ wendet dagegen unsere Aufmerksamkeit dem Träger (τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ) dieser Tätigkeit zu.[111]

Gregor versteht also die göttlichen Namen als (implizite) Sätze, um ihnen deutlich eine denotative Funktion zu geben:

> Aus jedem Namen, der von der göttlichen Natur ausgesagt wird—z.B. „gerecht“, „unvergänglich“, „unsterblich“, „ungezeugt“ oder was anderes von ihr gesagt wird—, verstehen wir sicherlich zugleich, dass diese Natur ist. Auch wenn die Aussage von diesem Verb nicht begleitet wird, wird „ist“ im Denken des Sprechers und des Zuhörers zum Namen hinzugefügt. Wenn es nämlich nicht hinzugefügt würde, würde die Aussage ganz leer ausgehen.[112]

Diese Behauptung Gregors erinnert an die Aussage des Aristoteles, der zufolge man nicht erkennen kann, *was* etwas ist, ohne zu wissen, *dass* es ist.[113] Nur lässt Gregor nicht zu, dass es überhaupt möglich wäre, die Gottheit in ihrem „was es ist“ zu kennen, man kann nur die Aspekte einsehen, die sie umgeben, die zugleich die Existenz ihres „Trägers“ implizit mitaussagen.

Wie Eunomius vor ihm, will damit Gregor die Namenauffassung seines Gegners teilweise gelten lassen, um mit Eunomius' eigenen Waffen seine Theorie zu widerlegen. Er gesteht dem Eunomius zu, dass die göttlichen Namen nicht nur die Eigenschaften aussagen, sondern auch auf ihren Träger hinweisen. Dies bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass sie mehr als seine Existenz aussagen

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110 *CE* III 5,56 (GNO II 180,19–23): εἰπόντες γὰρ ὅτι οὗτος ἢ γεγέννηται ἢ οὐ γεγέννηται, διπλῆν ἐντυπούμεθα διὰ τῶν εἰρημένων διάνοιαν, τῷ μὲν δεικτικῷ τοῦ λόγου πρὸς τὸ ὑποκείμενον βλέποντες, τῷ δὲ γεγέννηται ἢ οὐ γεγέννηται τὸ τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ προσθεωρούμενον διδασκόμενοι.

111 *CE* III 5,58 (GNO II 181,13–16): ὥσπερ τοίνυν εἰπόντες ὅτι κριτής ἐστι διὰ μὲν τῆς κρίσεως ἐνέργειάν τινα περὶ αὐτὸν ἐνοήσαμεν, διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἐστὶ τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ τὸν νοῦν ἐπεβάλομεν.

112 *CE* III 5,57 (GNO II 180,24181,6): ἀλλὰ καὶ παντὶ ὀνόματι τῷ περὶ τὴν θείαν λεγομένῳ φύσιν τὸ ἐστὶ πάντως συνυπακούεται, οἷον δίκαιος ἄφθαρτος ἀθάνατός τε καὶ ἀγέννητος καὶ εἴ τι ἕτερον λέγεται· κἂν μὴ τῇ φωνῇ συμπαρομαρτοῦν τύχῃ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ἡ διάνοια πάντως τοῦ φθεγγομένου καὶ τοῦ ἀκούοντος τῷ ἐστί προσαπαρτίζει τὸ ὄνομα, ὡς εἰ μὴ τοῦτο προσκέοιτο, κατὰ κενοῦ τὴν προσηγορίαν πίπτειν.

113 Vgl. Aristoteles, *Analytica posteriora* 93a20: ἀδύνατον γὰρ εἰδέναι τί ἐστιν, ἀγνοοῦντας εἰ ἔστιν.

können. Mit dem impliziten „ist“ wird das Wesen nicht erfasst, und es kann, als unbegrenzt, überhaupt nicht ausgesagt werden.

Da Gregor nur von den göttlichen Namen spricht, bleibt leider unklar, ob er diese Theorie auch für andere Namen voraussetzt. Ebenso ungeklärt bleibt in unserem Passus der Unterschied zwischen den Bezeichnungen „ungezeugt“ und „gezeugt“ einerseits, und den anderen göttlichen Namen andererseits, die dem Vater und dem Sohn ohne jeden Bedeutungsunterschied zugeschrieben werden. Gregor sagt nämlich nicht klar, dass „ungezeugt“ und „gezeugt“ nicht nur einzelne Aspekte der Gottheit unter anderen (wie die Gerechtigkeit, Güte usw.), sondern die Art und Weise andeuten, wie die Hypostasen in der Gottheit erkennbar werden. Er nennt zwar „gezeugt“ und „ungezeugt“ als zwei unterschiedliche Aspekte,[114] ohne sie jedoch deutlich von den anderen Aspekten abzuheben, die „um die Gottheit herum gesehen werden können“ (er nennt z.B. „ungezeugt“, ἀγέννητος, in einer Reihe mit „gerecht“, „unvergänglich“ und „unsterblich“ als den Aussagen von der göttlichen Natur).[115]

Gregor spricht gelegentlich zwar auch von der charakteristischen Eigenschaft (τὸ ἰδιάζον), die z.B. für die Unterscheidung zwischen dem Menschen und dem Pferd verantwortlich ist[116] oder die den Sohn von anderen gezeugten Wesen abhebt,[117] und er erwähnt sogar (leider nur sehr beiläufig), dass die göttlichen Hypostasen durch eine charakteristische Eigenschaft (τὸ τῆς ὑποστάσεως ἰδιάζον) unterschieden werden.[118] Seine Überlegungen zu diesem Thema sind in unserem Passus jedoch keineswegs systematisch. Vielleicht war es die Konzentration auf das gemeinsame Wesen und das mangelnde Interesse an der Eigenartigkeit der Hypostasen, die Gregor in der Polemik daran hinderte, zwischen den Namen der Einzelhypostasen einerseits (die Basilius als die Eigennamen behandelte) und den anderen göttlichen Namen andererseits zu unterscheiden.

7 Was ist die οὐσία? (*CE* III 5,39–49; 61–64)

Die unterschiedlichen philosophischen Vorstellungen, die in der ganzen Polemik mitschwingen, sind am ehesten an dem Schlüsselbegriff der οὐσία sichtbar. Er kann nämlich die erste aristotelische οὐσία (wie Sokrates), oder

114 Vgl. *CE* III 5,56 (GNO II 180,13–16).

115 Vgl. *CE* III 5,57 (GNO II 180,24–181,2). Ähnlich *CE* III 5,60 (GNO II 182,4–11).

116 Vgl. *CE* III 5,28 (GNO II 169,25–28).

117 Vgl. *CE* III 5,35 (GNO II 172,26–28).

118 Vgl. *CE* III 5,12 (GNO II 164,17).

die zweite aristotelische οὐσία (wie Mensch und Lebewesen),[119] oder aber das stoische materielle Substrat der Bestimmungen bezeichnen. Unsere drei Autoren sind in der Anwendung dieses Begriffes nicht einig und ein jeder von ihnen mag auch selbst nicht ganz konsequent sein. In diesem Beitrag kann ich kein komplexes Bild anbieten, wie die drei Autoren mit dem οὐσία–Begriff arbeiten.[120] Ich versuche jedoch an einigen Beispielen aus *CE* III 5 die ganze Problematik plastischer zu machen.

a) Eunomius. Wir haben schon die Regel des Eunomius erwähnt, nach der mit den unterschiedlichen Wesensbezeichnungen (αἱ σημαντικαὶ τῆς οὐσίας … προσηγορίαι) die unterschiedlichen Wesen, mit dem gleichen Ausdruck (μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ φωνή) jedoch das Gleiche bezeichnet wird.[121] Die „Wesensbezeichnungen" scheinen die Appellativa als Namen der zweiten aristotelischen Wesen zu sein, wie „Mensch" und „Pferd", die Eunomius als Beispiel nennt. Wenn Basilius die Eigennamen als ein Gegenbeispiel bringt (wo die unterschiedlichen Namen nicht das unterschiedliche Wesen bezeichnen), ist Eunomius bereit, auch auf sie seine Regel zu applizieren. Er versucht sogar (wie nach ihm Gregor) die Argumentation seines Gegners als einen Beleg seiner eigenen Theorie anzuwenden:

> Wenn wir die Namen auch zulassen, die (Basilius) als einen Beleg gegen uns anführt, wird unser Argument nicht weniger wahr. Wenn durch die Unterschiedlichkeit der Namen, die die Eigenschaften zum Ausdruck bringen, die Unterschiedlichkeit der Dinge gezeigt wird, dann ist es doch notwendig zuzulassen, dass auch die Unterschiedlichkeit der Wesen durch die Unterschiedlichkeit der Namen gezeigt wird, die die Wesen bezeichnen. Das gleiche könnte von allen Dingen gezeigt werden, nämlich von den Wesen, Tätigkeiten, Farben, Gestalten und anderen Qualitäten. Das Feuer und das Wasser, die unterschiedliche Wesen sind,

119 Vgl. Aristoteles, *Categoriae* 5, 2a11–19.

120 Zum Vergleich zwischen Basilius und Gregor von Nyssa s. R. M. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser der sog. ep. 38 des Basilius. Zum unterschiedlichen Verständnis der *ousia* bei den kappadozischen Brüdern", in: J. Fontaine – Ch. Kannengiesser (Hrsg.), *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou,* Paris 1972, 463–490, hier 469–482. Zur porphyrianischen Korrektur, der Basilius die stoische Ontologie in seiner Theologie unterzieht, s. D. G. Robertson, „Stoic and Aristotelian Notion of Substance in Basil of Caesarea", *VigChr* 52 (1998) 393–417.

121 Vgl. *CE* III 5,18 (GNO II 166,11–16): τῶν παρηλλαγμένων οὐσιῶν παρηλλαγμέναι πάντως καὶ αἱ σημαντικαὶ τῆς οὐσίας εἰσὶ προσηγορίαι ἐφ' ὧν δὲ μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ φωνή, ἓν πάντως ἔσται καὶ τὸ τῇ αὐτῇ προσηγορίᾳ δηλούμενον (ein Eunomius-Zitat). Ähnlich schon Eunomius, *Apologia* 18 (SC 305, 270).

> werden auch durch unterschiedliche Namen bezeichnet, und ähnlich ist es bei der Luft und der Erde, dem Kalten und dem Warmen, dem Weißen und dem Schwarzen, dem Dreieckigen und dem Runden. Und was soll ich von den intelligiblen Wesen sagen, die der Apostel aufzählte, und durch die Unterschiedlichkeit der Namen auch die Unterschiedlichkeit dieser Wesen zeigte?[122]

Was beweist eigentlich Eunomius mit diesem „stärkeren Argument" (τὸν ἰσχυρότερον λόγον), wie er es selber nennt?[123] Wenn man auch zulässt, dass die unterschiedlichen Namen die unterschiedlichen Eigenschaften (τὰς ἰδιότητας) bezeichnen (wie Basilius behauptet), so gilt deshalb nicht weniger, dass es um verschiedene Dinge (τῶν πραγμάτων) geht. Das Anliegen des Basilius, dass nämlich mit unterschiedlichen Eigennamen das gleiche Wesen gemeint werden kann, kehrt Eunomius damit in die Beobachtung um, nach der die Unterschiedlichkeit der Namen, auf welcher ontologischen Ebene auch immer (sei es ein Wesen, eine Tätigkeit oder eine Qualität), doch eine Unterschiedlichkeit bezeugt. Die gleichen Wesen werden ja nicht mit unterscheidlichen Namen der *Wesen* bezeichnet, wie „Mensch" und „Pferd", wie wir schon wissen.

Wahrscheinlich um die Schwierigkeiten mit dem ersten und dem zweiten aristotelischen Wesen zu vermeiden, wählt Eunomius als Beispiel die Elemente, bei denen sich die Frage des individuellen und des allgemeinen Wesens nicht ganz deutlich stellt:[124] Meint man schon das Feuer und das Wasser als die Elemente, oder als dieses Feuer da und dieses Wasser da, die unterschiedlichen Namen „Feuer" und „Wasser" bezeugen doch deutlich ihre Unterschiedlichkeit. Die Polemik Gregors, die sich gegen den Vergleich zwischen dem Gezeugten

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122 *CE* III 5,39–40 (GNO II 174,15–175,2): καὶ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἔλεγχον προβληθέντων ὀνομάτων παραδεχθέντων οὐδὲν ἧττον ἀληθὴς ὁ παρ' ἡμῶν φανερωθήσεται λόγος. εἴπερ ἡ παραλλαγὴ τῶν τὰς ἰδιότητας σημαινόντων ὀνομάτων τὴν παραλλαγὴν ἐμφαίνει τῶν πραγμάτων, ἀνάγκη δήπου συγχωρεῖν καὶ τῇ παραλλαγῇ τῶν τὰς οὐσίας σημαινόντων συνεμφαίνεσθαι τὴν παραλλαγὴν τῶν οὐσιῶν. καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ πάντων οὕτως ἔχον εὕροι τις ἄν, λέγω δὲ οὐσιῶν ἐνεργειῶν χρωμάτων σχημάτων τῶν ἄλλων ποιοτήτων. πῦρ τε γὰρ καὶ ὕδωρ, διαφόρους οὐσίας, παρηλλαγμέναις σημαίνομεν προσηγορίαις, ἀέρα τε καὶ γῆν, ψυχρόν τε αὖ καὶ θερμόν, λευκόν τε καὶ μέλαν ἢ τρίγωνον καὶ περιφερές· τί γὰρ δεῖ περὶ τῶν νοητῶν λέγειν οὐσιῶν, ἃς καταλέγων ὁ ἀπόστολος τῇ διαφορᾷ τῶν ὀνομάτων τὴν παραλλαγὴν ἐνέφηνε τῶν οὐσιῶν;

123 *CE* III 5,39 (GNO II 174,14).

124 Vgl. dazu M. Frede, „Der Begriff des Individuums bei den Kirchenvätern", *JAC* 40 (1997) 38–54, bes. 49.

und Ungezeugten einerseits und den einander feindlichen Elementen andererseits wendet,[125] scheint das Anliegen des Eunomius nicht zu treffen.

Wenn nämlich Eunomius die Paare der unterschiedlichen Elemente und der Qualitäten nennt (das Feuer und das Wasser, die Luft und die Erde, das Kalte und das Warme, das Weiße und das Schwarze, das Dreieckige und das Runde), will er wahrscheinlich nicht ihre Unverträglichkeit (τὰ διὰ πάντων ἀκοινώνητα)[126] hervorheben, wie ihm Gregor unterstellt, sondern ihre bloße Andersheit im Rahmen der gleichen Bestimmung zeigen (sei es das Wesen, die Tätigkeit, die Farbe oder die Gestalt). Für das Feuer und das Wasser kann zwar behauptet werden, dass sie einander vernichten (φθαρτικὴν κατ' ἀλλήλων τὴν φύσιν ἔχει), wie Gregor ausführt.[127] Für die Erde und die Luft gilt dies jedoch nicht so deutlich, da ihre Eigenschaften zwar gegensätzlich (ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων) erscheinen (die Erde ist im Stillstand, fest, zurückschlagend, sich abwärts neigend und schwer, während die Luft die entgegengesetzten Eigenschaften trägt), sich jedoch einander nicht direkt vernichten, wie Gregor selber bemerkt.[128] Das Weiße und das Schwarze werden für gegensätzliche Farben (ἐν τῇ ἐναντιότητι τῶν χρωμάτων) gehalten, das Dreieckige und das Runde jedoch nur für „nicht identisch" erklärt (μὴ ταὐτόν), und zwar in dem Sinne, dass jedes von ihnen seiner Definition zufolge gerade für dasjenige gilt, was das andere nicht ist (ἐκεῖνο γάρ ἐστιν ἑκάτερον ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ σχήματος, ὅπερ οὐκ ἔστι τὸ ἕτερον).[129] Die durch Eunomius genannten Paare beinhalten damit neben den entgegengesetzten Polen eines Spektrums (das Weiße und das Schwarze, das Kalte und das Warme)[130] auch die bloße Andersheit in der gleichen Bestimmung (das Dreieckige und das Runde). Die Elemente sind streng genommen nicht Gegensätze, da einander „entgegengesetzt" nur ihre Qualitäten (warm und kalt bzw. trocken und nass usw.) sind. Eunomius, wie gesagt, will hier jedoch wahrscheinlich keine Theorie der Gegensätze entwickeln, sondern nur Beispiele der Andersheit nennen. Ob er die Aussagen „ungezeugt" und „gezeugt" als Gegensätze verstanden hat, evtl. in welchem Sinne er dies tat, ist eine andere Frage, die hier nicht gelöst wird.[131]

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125 *CE* III 5,45–46 (GNO II 176 f.).

126 *CE* III 5,41 (GNO II 175,15 f.).

127 *CE* III 5,45 (GNO II 176,21 f.).

128 *CE* III 5,46 (GNO II 177,9–12).

129 *CE* III 5,46 (GNO II 177,12–16).

130 Auch Aristoteles nennt das Weiße und das Schwarze bzw. das Warme und das Kalte als Beispiele für diejenigen Gegensätze (τὰ ἐναντία), die ein Mittleres zulassen (vgl. *Categoriae* 10, 12b33–35): οὔτε γὰρ λευκὸν ἢ μέλαν ἀνάγκη πᾶν εἶναι τὸ δεκτικόν, οὔτε θερμὸν ἢ ψυχρόν, τούτων γὰρ ἀνὰ μέσον τι οὐδὲν κωλύει ὑπάρχειν.

131 Gregor versteht das Gezeugte und das Ungezeugte als Gegensätze im Sinne der Affirmation und Negation (wie „zu leben und nicht zu leben"), die kein Mittelglied

Wenn Eunomius zugleich die unterschiedlichen „intelligiblen Wesen“ (περὶ τῶν νοητῶν οὐσιῶν) erwähnt,[132] die vom Apostel durch unterschiedliche Namen bezeichnet werden, meint er offensichtlich die einzelnen Engelchöre, die jedoch alle eben als intelligible Wesen oder Engel verstanden werden. Wie auch immer Eunomius die Engel und ihre Individualität verstanden hat, das „Wesen“ scheint (hier?) für ihn etwas anderes zu bezeichnen als das Gemeinsame, was die Engel als intelligible Geschöpfe alle teilen (die Natur).[133]

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zulassen und einander unverträglich sind: ἀντίθεσίν τινα καὶ ἀντιδιαστολὴν ἀμεσίτευτον, ὡς τὸ ἐν ἑκατέρῳ σημαινόμενον μηδενὶ τρόπῳ κοινωνεῖν πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον (*CE* III 10,52, GNO II 310,6–12). Er nennt diese Art des Gegensatzes auch ἀντικείμενον, vgl. *CE* III 10,53 (GNO II 310,19–21): τὸ ἕτερον τῆς ἀντιφάσεως μέρος ἀκοινώνητον πρὸς τὸ ἀντικείμενον μένει. Eunomius scheint diese Vorstellung eher für seinen polemischen Zweck zuzulassen, vgl. *CE* III 10,51 (GNO II 309,18–21): ναί, φησίν, ἀλλ’ εἰ τοῦ γεννητοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον ἐναντίως ἔχοντος κατ’ ἴσον ὑποβαίνοι τὸ γεννητὸν φῶς πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον φῶς, τὸ μὲν γενήσεται φῶς, τὸ δὲ σκότος. Ob er selber das Gezeugte und das Ungezeugte als Gegensätze im Sinne der Affirmation und Negation verstanden hat, scheint mir nicht ganz sicher zu sein. Aristoteles unterscheidet in der Kategorienschrift vier Arten von Gegensätzen: die Relativa (wie das Doppelte und das Halbe), das Konträre (wie das Gute und das Schlechte), den privativen Gegensatz (wie die Blindheit der Sehkraft gegenüber) und die Negation (wie „er sitzt“ dem „er sitzt nicht“ gegenüber): Λέγεται δὲ ἕτερον ἑτέρῳ ἀντικεῖσθαι τετραχῶς, ἢ ὡς τὰ πρός τι, ἢ ὡς τὰ ἐναντία, ἢ ὡς στέρησις καὶ ἕξις, ἢ ὡς κατάφασις καὶ ἀπόφασις (*Categoriae* 10, 11b17–19, vgl. den ganzen Passus 10–11, 11b17–14a25). In seiner ersten *Apologie* schließt Eunomius die Möglichkeit aus, das „Ungezeugte“ als eine Privation (κατὰ στέρησιν) zu verstehen, da diese als ein Mangel der natürlichen Eigenschaft (τῶν κατὰ φύσιν) und gegenüber der Possession als sekundär erscheint (τῶν ἕξεων δεύτεραι), vgl. *Apologia* 8 (Vaggione 42,7 f.). Es ist jedoch nicht ohne Weiteres klar, ob es sich um eine Negation (ἀπόφασις) handelt, da in diesem Fall immer eine der Aussagen wahr sein müsste: „Er ist gezeugt“ oder „Er ist nicht gezeugt“, d.h. es würde keine dritte Möglicheit geben (vgl. *Cat.* 10, 13b29–35). Vom Heiligen Geist sagt jedoch Eunomius ausdrücklich, dass er (vom Sohn) nicht „gezeugt“ (γέννημα), sondern „geschaffen“ (ποίημα) sei, vgl. *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 68,19–25). Die Glieder des Paares „gezeugt-ungezeugt“ scheinen daher nicht wie die Zugrundeliegenden der Affirmation und der Negation entgegengesetzt zu sein, sondern vielmehr als zwei Pole der konträren Gegensätze (τὰ ἐναντία), die noch ein Drittes zulassen (wie „gerecht-ungerecht“, δίκαιον-ἄδικον, bei Aristoteles, derer Mitte keinen Namen trägt, vgl. *Categoriae* 10, 12a17–25). Da es sich jedoch um keine Mitte handelt, sondern um eine dritte Möglichkeit, scheint es fragwürdig zu sein, ob es bei dem Paar „gezeugt-ungezeugt“ überhaupt um Gegensätze geht.—In diesem Kontext mag die spätere neuplatonische Diskussion interessant sein, in der das Unentstandene (τὸ ἀγένητον) und das Entstandene (γένητον) nicht als Gegensätze (ἐναντία) behandelt werden, vgl. Damascius (über Syrianus), *In Phaedonem*, §193 (hg. L. G. Westerink, *The Greek Commentaries on Plato’s Phaedo,* II, Amsterdam 1977, 117).

132 *CE* III 5,40 (GNO II 174,28–175,2).

133 In *Adversus Eunomium* III 1 (SC 305, 148–150) erörtert Basilius die unterschiedlichen Würden der Engel, die jedoch alle einen einzigen Namen (προσηγορίας μιᾶς) und dieselbe Natur (φύσεως τῆς αὐτῆς) teilen. Es geht also vielmehr um die Bezeichnung „Engel“ als um

Was meinte er mit dem Begriff οὐσία, wenn die einzelnen Gruppen der Engel (die Throne, Mächte, Herrschaften oder was auch immer), oder vielleicht sogar die einzelnen Engel, je eine andere οὐσία sind? Er meinte doch höchstwahrscheinlich nicht die Natur, wie ihm Gregor unterstellt,[134] eher etwas wie die aristotelische erste οὐσία oder eine unter die gleiche Bezeichnung gestellte Gruppe.

Etwas überraschend mag daher die Auskunft Gregors wirken, dass Eunomius „alles, was durch den Begriff des Wesens (τῷ τῆς οὐσίας λόγῳ) vereint wird, für durchaus körperlich und mit dem Untergang verbunden" hält.[135]

Der gemeinsame „Begriff des Wesens" scheint dasjenige zu bezeichnen, was mehreren Einzelwesen gemeinsam ist, und lässt an das zweite aristotelische Wesen denken. Will damit Eunomius als ein Aristoteliker sagen, dass die Einzeldinge, die unter einen Wesensbegriff subsumiert werden, als Einzeldinge nur dank der Materie individuell sein können und als Einzeldinge des sublunaren Bereichs notwendig untergehen?[136] Er dürfte damit zeigen wollen, dass der Vergleich, den Basilius zwischen den Einzelwesen und dem gemeinsamen Wesen einerseits und den göttlichen Personen und der göttlichen Natur andererseits macht, absurde Implikationen enthält.

Oder meint Eunomius mit dem „Begriff des Wesens" (τῷ τῆς οὐσίας λόγῳ) einfach das Wort οὐσία, wodurch diejenigen Dinge „vereint werden", die als ὁμοούσια erklärt werden? Schon in seiner ersten *Apologia* hat Eunomius erörtert, dass Gott sein Wesen mit keinem teilen kann, da er dadurch seine Ungezeugtheit (ἀγέννητος) und Unverletzlichkeit (ἀφθαρσία) verlieren würde. Gottes Wesen ist daher nicht kommunizierbar (ἀκοινώνητον).[137] Durch die Zeugung, die „aus dem eigenen Wesen hervorgeht" (ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας γεννῶν),[138] wird zwar die gleiche Natur mitgeteilt (τῆς οἰκείας . . . μεταδίδωσι φύσεως). Diese Vorstellung ist jedoch nur für die körperliche Zeugung charakteristisch, und Eunomius will sie Gott fernhalten.[139] Eunomius dürfte also mit der durch Gregor zitierten Formulierung meinen, dass diejenigen Dinge, die als ὁμοούσια

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die Namen der Engelchöre, wie sie der Apostel nennt (nur Michael wird durch Basilius im Zusammenhang mit *Dan* 10,13 beim Namen genannt).

134 *CE* III 5,63–64 (GNO II 183 f.).

135 *CE* III 5,61 (GNO II 182,26–183,2): πάντα ὅσα τῷ τῆς οὐσίας ἥνωται λόγῳ πάντως ἐν σώμασιν εἶναι καὶ φθορᾷ συνεζεῦχθαι (ein Eunomius-Zitat).

136 So meint B. Pottier, *Dieu*, 91.

137 Eunomius, *Apologia* 9 (Vaggione 42,1–44,11).

138 Eunomius, *Apologia* 16 (Vaggione 52,5).

139 Eunomius, *Apologia* 18 (Vaggione 54,1 f.). Deswegen versteht Eunomius den „Vater" nicht als eine Aussage vom Wesen des Ungezeugten, sondern von der Wirkung (ἐνέργεια) des Zeugenden (*Apologia* 24, Vaggione 67,1 f.), die er als einen Willen (βούλησις) interpretiert

bezeichnet werden, notwendig „körperlich und mit dem Untergang verbunden" seien, weil nichts anderes als das Körperliche sein Wesen kommunizieren kann.

Oder aber es könnte sich auch um eine spöttische Anspielung auf die stoische Inspiration des Basilius handeln, der ja selber sagt, dass er die οὐσία als ein „materielles Substrat" versteht.[140] Wir erfahren jedenfalls von Gregor, dass Eunomius das Beispiel der Einzelwesen und ihrer Namen wegen der Materialität des Einzelnen als „unverschämt" angesehen hat.[141]

In allen diesen Kontexten, die unserer Passage entnommen sind, scheint Eunomius die οὐσία vor allem im Sinne des aristotelischen ersten Wesens zu verstehen. Er spricht jedoch auch von den *Namen* der Wesen, die er als Bezeichnungen der zweiten Wesen, nicht als die Eigennamen, benutzt. Daher behauptet er, dass mit den unterschiedlichen Wesensnamen (Appellativa) die unterschiedlichen Wesen bezeichnet werden. Die Schwierigkeit, die in seinem οὐσία-Begriff steckt, scheint diejenige des Aristoteles selber zu sein: Nur das erste Wesen ist im eigentlichen Sinne, aber nur das zweite Wesen kann begrifflich gefasst werden.[142] Für Eunomius heißt dies, dass der Ungezeugte und der Gezeugte zwei unterschiedliche Wesen, primär im Sinne der ersten οὐσίαι, sind, ihre Bezeichnungen spielen jedoch nicht die Rolle der Eigennamen, sondern der Wesensbegriffe (wie „Mensch" und „Pferd"). Im Unterschied zu Basilius ist Eunomius nicht bereit die Bezeichnungen „Ungezeugt" und „Gezeugt" als Eigennamen zu verstehen. Daher muss er den Ungezeugten und den Gezeugten als zwei unterschiedliche Wesen nicht nur im Sinne des ersten, sondern auch des zweiten aristotelischen Wesens interpretieren.

b) Basilius. Was den Begriff οὐσία bei Basilius betrifft, finden wir in der durch Gregor zitierten Passage aus dem zweiten Buch *Adversus Eunomium*[143] zwei nicht ohne Weiteres gleiche Aussagen. Basilius behauptet zuerst, dass das Wesen bei allen Menschen nur eines ist (οὐσία δὲ πάντων μία), während sich die Eigennamen unterscheiden. In diesem Zusammenhang scheint Basilius das „Wesen" im Sinne der zweiten aristotelischen οὐσία zu benutzen. Gegen Ende des Passus fügt er jedoch hinzu, dass er die οὐσία „nun" im Sinne eines „materiellen Substrats" (τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον) versteht. Will er damit einen Bedeutungswechsel im Wort οὐσία andeuten—daher vielleicht νῦν in seiner

(*Apologia* 24, Vaggione 67,21 f.), da eine Wirkung dieser Art „am meisten Gott ziemt" (*Apologia* 23, Vaggione 64,16 f.).

140 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,11).

141 *CE* III 5,48 (GNO II 177,26–178,3).

142 Vgl. Aristoteles, *Categoriae* 5, 2a19–3b23.

143 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 18,1–20,13), zitiert oben, Anm. 63. Ähnlich auch Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* I 15 (SC 299, 226,34 f.).

Erklärung?[144] Oder will er nur andeuten, dass er „jetzt" das Wort οὐσία anders als in der Theologie benutzt? In diesem zweiten Fall könnten die beiden Aussagen von der οὐσία in unserem Passus zusammengenommen werden, und Basilius würde dann *ein* allen Menschen gemeinsames materielles Substrat voraussetzen. Dies scheint durch die unmittelbare Fortsetzung seiner Polemik bestätigt zu werden, wo Basilius als einen Beleg der „gemeinsamen Natur" (τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως), d.h. der Homoousie aller Menschen (τὸ ὁμοούσιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων), den Bibelvers *Hiob* 33,6 (LXX) zitiert: „Du bist wie ich aus einem Klumpen gemacht" (ἐκ πηλοῦ διήρτισαι σὺ ὡς καὶ ἐγώ).[145] Eine solche Vorstellung wirkt etwas befremdend, da die Stoiker, an die sie am meisten denken lässt, nicht ein *gemeinsames* Substrat als einen Träger (ὑποκείμενον oder οὐσία) von mehreren qualifizierenden individuellen Eigenschaften vorausgesetzt haben. Zwei Individuen können nicht das gleiche materielle Substrat teilen (wie wir aus dem Theon-Paradox wissen: δύο ἰδίως ποιὰ ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσίας ἀμήχανον συστῆναι).[146] Es sei denn, Basilius meinte so etwas wie die „erste Materie aller Seienden" (ἡ τῶν ὄντων πάντων πρώτη ὕλη) bei Zenon, die auch οὐσία heißt.[147]

Etwas überraschend sagt hier Basilius zugleich auch, dass die οὐσία „als ὑπόστασις verstanden" wird.[148] Der Begriff ὑπόστασις ist nämlich in der späteren kappadozischen Theologie vielmehr dem Einzelnen bzw. den göttlichen Personen reserviert,[149] und sogar Eunomius wendet die ὑπόστασις als die Bezeichnung der Selbständigkeit des Heiligen Geistes an.[150] In seiner Polemik gegen Eunomius benutzt jedoch Basilius den Begriff ὑπόστασις im Sinne der drei trinitarischen Personen nur einmal;[151] an einigen Stellen kann der Begriff

144 So P. Kalligas, „Basil of Caesarea", 43; D. G. Robertson, „A Patristic Theory", 12 f.

145 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,30–22,34).

146 Philon von Alexandrien, *De aetern. mundi* 48 (SVF II 397). Vgl. dazu D. Sedley, „The Stoic Criterion of Identity", 267.

147 Vgl. Stobaeus, *Ant.* I 11,5a,2–5 (= SVF I 87). S. dazu M. E. Reesor, „The Stoic Concept of Quality", 40 f.

148 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,18).

149 Vgl. dazu v. a. *De differentia essentiae et hypostaseos* (hg. v. Y. Courtonne, Basile, *Lettres*, I, Paris, 1957, *Ep.* 38, 81–92), sei dieser Brief nun Basilius oder Gregor zuzuschreiben (die Diskussion über die Verfasserschaft habe ich in *„Ad Ablabium"*, 132, Anm. 6, zusammengefasst). Basilius unterscheidet in diesem Sinn die ὑπόστασις von der οὐσία deutlich z. B. im Brief 236,6,1–12 an Amphilochus (Courtonne III, 53), gründlicher Gregor von Nyssa, *Ad Graecos* (GNO III/1, 19–33).

150 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 68,17). So benutzt den Begriff „Hypostase" schon Origenes, wahrscheinlich nach Numenius, vgl. dazu M. Frede, „Der Begriff des Individuums", 45–47. Vgl. natürlich auch *Hebr.* 1,3.

151 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* III 3 (SC 305, 154,4 f.).

wohl das Individuelle bedeuten.[152] Sehr oft kommt dagegen ὑπόστασις im Sinne von Subsistenz, Existenz, Realität vor,[153] einmal deutlich gleichbedeutend mit ὕπαρξις.[154]

Dies könnte auch in unserem Zusammenhang der Fall sein, wo Basilius sagt, dass die Eigennamen (hier „Petrus") die einzelnen Umstände aussagen, „von denen jedoch keiner das Wesen im Sinne der Hypostase ist" (ὧν οὐδέν ἐστιν οὐσία, ὡς ἡ ὑπόστασις νοουμένη).[155] Basilius könnte dann meinen, dass keine der mit dem Namen assoziierten Eigenschaften die Existenz bedeutet (was für die Theorie der Eigennamen sehr interessant wäre, da man damit die Schwierigkeiten mit „Pegasus" und anderen Eigennamen der nicht existierenden Fabelwesen lösen könnte). Oder lässt sich da Basilius durch die (sehr verbreitete) Gleichsetzung von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις verführen und fügt die ὑπόστασις als ein bloßes Äquivalent der οὐσία hinzu?[156] Oder benutzt er hier die ὑπόστασις im Sinne des stoischen ὑποκείμενον, d.h. letztlich auch mit der οὐσία gleichbedeutend?[157] Oder ist die Stelle sogar eine Korruptelle und sollte es ὑποκείμενον statt ὑπόστασις im Text stehen?[158] Oder aber, was eine weitere Möglichkeit wäre, soll hier ein Bedeutungswechsel im Wort οὐσία angedeutet werden: „keiner dieser (Umstände) ist jedoch das Wesen *im Sinne der Hypostase*", d.h. im Sinne des Einzelwesens. Durch den Eigennamen wäre damit weder das undifferenzierte Substrat (οὐσία als ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον), noch die Einzelhypostase (οὐσία als ὑπόστασις) bezeichnet.

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152 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 9 (SC 305, 36,21); *Adversus Eunomium* III 2 (SC 305, 154,40).

153 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* I 5 (SC 299, 182,136); *Adversus Eunomium* I 15 (SC 299, 226,33); *Adversus Eunomium* II 16 (SC 305, 65,39); *Adversus Eunomium* II 19 (SC 305, 78,47); *Adversus Eunomium* III 7 (SC 305, 170,9).

154 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 13 (SC 305, 50,28–30). Vgl. dazu J. Pépin, „Ὕπαρξις et ὑπόστασις en Cappadoce", in: F. Romano – D. P. Taormina (Hg.), *Hyparxis e Hypostasis nel Neoplatonismo: Atti del I Colloquio Internazionale del Centro di Ricerca sul Neoplatonismo, Università degli Studi di Catania, 1–3 ottobre 1992*, Firenze 1994, 59–78, hier 69 f.

155 Vgl. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 4 (SC 305, 20,18).

156 Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte des Wortes ὑπόστασις einschließlich seiner Gleichsetzung mit οὐσία vgl. H. Dörrie, „Ὑπόστασις. Wort- und Bedeutungsgeschichte", in: *Platonica Minora*, München 1976, 12–69, bes. 38.

157 Vgl. J. Zachhuber, „Stoic Substance, Non-Existent Matter? Some Passages in Basil of Caesarea Reconsidered", *StPatr* 41 (2006) 425–430, hier 426, Anm. 5.

158 Zu dieser Lösung neigt Th. Böhm, der auch weitere textkritische Möglichkeiten nennt: Es könnte sich bei der Partizipialkonstruktion ὡς ἡ ὑπόστασις νοουμένη (bzw. ἡ ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη) auch um eine Marginalie handeln, oder könnte eine Negation <οὐχ> hinzuzufügen sein. Vgl. Th. Böhm, „Basilius: *Adversus Eunomium* II 4: Eine untypische Verwendung von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις?", *StPatr* 32 (1997) 72–80.

Wie wir sehen, ist in unserem Basilius-Zitat und seinem unmittelbaren Kontext der οὐσία-Begriff sehr unklar. Es ist weder eindeutig das materielle Substrat im stoischen Sinne, noch das zweite aristotelische Wesen, noch das Individuelle. Es kann jedoch unter Umständen als dies alles interpretiert werden.

c) Gregor. Anders als sein Bruder scheint Gregor in unserer Passage seinem Gegner eine relativ klare Auffassung der οὐσία als des zweiten aristotelischen Wesens (manchmal auch als φύσις bezeichnet)[159] entgegenzuhalten. In diesem Sinne versteht er das gleiche Wesen, das der unerzeugte Vater mit dem gezeugten, wenn auch ungeschaffenen Sohn teilt.[160] Um dieses polemischen Zweckes willen ist Gregor bereit zuzugestehen, dass dieses Wesen als Geist verstanden werden kann,[161] obwohl für ihn das göttliche Wesen grundsätzlich undefinierbar und mit keinem Namen fassbar bleibt. Ein solcher Name würde nämlich die Antwort auf die Frage geben, *was* die Gottheit ist (καθὸ ἔστι τὸν λόγον), nämlich eine Definition.[162] Ein solcher Name kann nach Gregor wegen der Unbegrenztheit des göttlichen Wesens jedoch nicht genannt werden.[163]

Auch die unkörperlichen Seelen teilen nach Gregors Auskunft ein gemeinsames Wesen und sind in diesem Sinne ὁμοούσια (ohne deswegen auch materiell und vergänglich zu sein).[164] Die Engel tragen unterschiedliche Namen nicht wegen ihres unterschiedlichen Wesens, sondern dank ihrer mannigfaltigen Tätigkeit.[165]

Sogar wenn Gregor die durch Eunomius angegriffene Passage des Basilius zitiert, ist er bereit, die οὐσία statt als ein „materielles Substrat" (so Basilius) eben „*nicht* als ein materielles Substrat" (οὐ τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον) zu charakterisieren, und dadurch die οὐσία dem zweiten aristotelischen Wesen anzupassen.[166] Dass diese Änderung schon Eunomius gemacht hätte (nach dem hier der Basilius-Text wohl zitiert wird), ist nicht besonders wahrscheinlich, weil er an einer aristotelisierenden Korrektur seines stoisch beeinflussten Gegners wenig Interesse haben konnte. Oder wollte er doch den Text zuerst für sich überhaupt sinnvoll

159 Vgl. *CE* III 5,35 (GNO II 173,1); *CE* III 5,41 (GNO II 175,12); *CE* III 5,42 (GNO II 175,22); *CE* III 5,44 (GNO II 176,14 f. und 24); *CE* III 5,48 (GNO II 177,28); *CE* III 5,63 (GNO II 183,21 und 23); *CE* III 5,64 (GNO II 184,5).

160 *CE* III 5,42 (GNO II 175,23).

161 *CE* III 5,17–18 (GNO II 166,2–24).

162 *CE* III 5,60 (GNO II 182,8).

163 *CE* III 5,55 (GNO II 180,1–12).

164 *CE* III 5,62 (GNO II 183,5–17).

165 *CE* III 5,63–64 (GNO II 183,17–183,11).

166 *CE* III 5,22 (GNO II 168,1 f.). Vgl. oben, Anm. 63. S. dazu D. L. Balás, „The Unity of Human Nature in Basil's and Gregory of Nyssa's Polemics against Eunomius", *StPatr* 16, 1976, 275–281; R. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa", 474.

machen, bevor er gegen ihn polemisierte? Dies scheint nicht dem Stil der ganzen Polemik zu entsprechen.

Wenn Gregor die Ausführungen des Eunomius zum Bibelvers *2 Kor* 3,17 auslacht, bleibt es eher unklar, welche Auffassung von οὐσία er seinem Gegner eigentlich unterstellen will. Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen (wenn auch nicht eindeutig klar), dass er eher die erste aristotelische οὐσία im Sinn hat, wenn er z.B. sagt: „Wie anders haben wir alle, die wir am Leben sind, am Leben einen Anteil, als durch das (eigene?) Wesen (τῇ οὐσίᾳ)"?[167] Ähnlich spricht Gregor auch vom „Wesen des Petrus" (ἡ οὐσία τοῦ Πέτρου), das mit seinem neuen Namen nicht geändert wurde,[168] wobei schwierig zu entscheiden ist, ob er das erste oder das zweite Wesen meint. Diese eher seltenen Stellen ändern jedoch nichts an dem Eindruck, dass Gregor, wenn nicht anders angeführt, mit οὐσία das zweite aristotelische Wesen meint.

Mit einer gewissen Vereinfachung kann daher zusammenfassend gesagt werden, dass Eunomius am meisten der aristotelischen Anwendung des Begriffes οὐσία nahe kommt, in der die erste οὐσία die konstitutive Rolle spielt und die zweite οὐσία nur von ihr ausgesagt wird, während Gregor meistens eher die zweite οὐσία im Sinn hat (wie immer er sie auch versteht).[169] Basilius bekennt sich zwar zum stoischen „materiellen Substrat", in seiner Theologie lässt er sich jedoch von einer (porphyrianischen?) Aristotelisierung der stoischen Ontologie beeinflussen und rechnet mit so etwas wie dem immateriellen zweiten Wesen und den immateriellen Eigenschaften, die dieses Substrat als Einzelhypostasen erkennen lassen.

Schluss

In unserer Passage seiner Polemik hat Gregor einerseits eine (durch Origenes inspirierte) Theorie der christlichen Bibelexegese angeboten, wobei er für den „eigentlichen Sinn" der Schrift den Heiligen Geist als ihren Inspirator und Herrn erklärte und dabei zugleich den Geist als eine Hypostase vom Geist als dem Wesen differenzierte. Andererseits hat er statt der Unterscheidung gezeugt/ungezeugt, anhand derer Eunomius das ungleiche Wesen des Ungezeugten und des Eingeborenen beweisen wollte, die Differenzierung geschaffen/

167 *CE* III 5,4 (GNO II 161,21 f.): τίνι γὰρ ἄλλῳ καὶ οὐχὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ τοῦ ζῆν μετέχομεν ἅπαντες οἱ ἐν τῷ ζῆν ὄντες;

168 *CE* III 5,52 (GNO II 179,12 f.).

169 Die Diskussion über Gregors Auffassung der Universalien habe ich andernorts zusammengefasst, vgl. *„Ad Ablabium"*, 145–149.

ungeschaffen herausgearbeitet, die dem Sohn die gleiche ungeschaffene Gottheit (im Sinne der Natur oder der zweiten aristotelischen οὐσία) wie dem Vater zuschreibt.

Obwohl Gregor mit seiner Theorie der doppelten Aussage des Namens einen interessanten Beitrag zur Debatte über die Semantik der Namen geleistet hat, schenkte er leider der Auffassung der Eigennamen, die für Basilius mit im Spiel war, in unserem Passus wenig Aufmerksamkeit. Dieses philosophische Versehen hat sich auch in der Trinitätslehre gerächt, wie sie in Gregors Polemik vorkommt. Die Bezeichnungen der Hypostasen werden hier nämlich von anderen Aspekten, die „um die Gottheit herum gesehen werden", nicht deutlich unterschieden. Eine solche Differenzierung, die Gregor in seinen anderen Schriften kennt,[170] wird in unserem Passus nur für die Aussage „Geist" im Sinne der Hypostase und im Sinne des Wesens duchgeführt.

Appendix: Die Gliederung von *CE* III 5

I ***Die pneumatologische Interpretation von 2 Kor 3,17***

1–7 Der Geist ist nicht mit dem Wesen identisch
8–16 Die Theorie der Bibelinterpretation
16–18 Der Geist als Wesen

II ***Gezeugt/ungezeugt versus geschaffen/ungeschaffen***

19–25 Basilius' Beispiel der Eigennamen
26–31 Gott kann nicht geschaffen sein
32–38 Gott kann gezeugt sein
39–49 Die gegensätzlichen Namen
50–55 Die menschliche Herkunft der Namen
56–60 Die Doppelaussage der göttlichen Namen
61–64 Auch die unkörperlichen Dinge können eines Wesens sein

170 Vgl. die Abhandlung *De differentia,* falls Gregor ihr Verfasser ist (vgl. oben, Anm. 149); *Ad Graecos* (GNO III/1, 21–33); *Ad Ablabium* (GNO III/1, 55–57).

Contra Eunomium III 6

Michel René Barnes

The stated purpose of *CE* III 6 is to establish the Son's equal eternity with the Father. Judgment on the reality—or lack thereof—of the Son's eternal existence proved to be, in the fourth century, a decisive standard by which the fullness of the Son's divinity was measured. Alexander of Alexandria's declaration of the Son's full eternity triggered Arius's doctrinal revolt against his hierarch. I believe that the controversy over the catchphrase, "There was when he was not" is a controversy waged using a slogan which all sides recognized as a token expressing the fundamental issue at stake. Whether one party or another actually used the slogan was irrelevant in the face of the real question of the Son's eternal existence as compared to God the Father's. The doctrine that "the Son is not truly eternal as the Father is" is a belief that Arius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Acacius, and Eunomius all have in common—a fundamental, non-negotiable, insight. Gregory shares with Alexander of Alexandria and Athanasius (and many others) the belief that the Son is truly eternal as the Father is—likewise as a fundamental, non-negotiable, insight: "Eternal Father, eternal Son".

The means by which Gregory accomplishes his purpose of establishing the Son's equal eternity with the Father is predominantly through arguments of inner-Trinitarian causality. In the fourth century positive statements of Trinitarian doctrine using aetiological models was an accepted, traditional way of expressing Trinitarian theology. Moreover, Eunomius's argument for the non-eternal existence of the Son is given in terms of causality: in his *Apology* Eunomius argues that the energy that produces the Son is temporary, with a beginning and end, and for this reason no product of that energy can be eternal. (The understanding that an effect ceases to exist when its cause ceases to exist is known as *synectic*: even prior to Eunomius, it is tied, as I have shown elsewhere, to a strong use of "energeia").[1]

Richard Vaggione has argued that Book III of Gregory's *Contra Eunomium* engages the third book of Eunomius's response to Basil's criticism of the *Apology* (in his *CE* II 1–29).[2] In book three of his later work Eunomius develops and defends his original arguments as they begin in c12 of the *Apology*; Part 6 of Gregory's Third Book is in response to Eunomius's recent elaboration of

1 M. R. Barnes, "The Background and Use of Eunomius' Causal Language", in: M. R. Barnes – D. H. Williams (eds.) *Arianism After Arius*, Edinburgh 1993, 217–236.

2 R. Vaggione (ed.), *Eunomius: The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 94–95.

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the argument he originally offered in *Apology* 15–17. In *Apology* 15 Eunomius argued that the Son is not begotten out of nothing or from underlying matter, nor is the Son from God's essence, but the Son is the product of God's will alone. In *Apology* 16 Eunomius argued that terms of production are not attributed to the Father as they are attributed to human production. In *Apology* 17 Eunomius argued that God is called "Maker" in a sense that excludes the need for pre-existent material for Him to build with; and that God is called "Father" in a sense that excludes the presence of passion in the act of begetting. In making this argument in c17 Eunomius uses *analogos* for the only time in the *Apology* in order to characterize the relationship between God's activity of Father and human activity of father, or God being called "Spirit" as the angels are called "spirits". Gregory's argument in Part 6, of course, makes strong use of his notion of analogical predication. However, while Vaggione's thesis does indeed reveal a proportionate congruency among Eunomius's *Apology* 15–17, Basil's *Contra Eunomium* II.11–13, a section of the reconstructed third book of Eunomius's *Second Apology*, and Gregory's Part VI of Book Three of his *Against Eunomius*, in the end Vaggione's thesis is not borne out overall by consistent cases of proportionate congruencies between Gregory's book III and Eunomius's *Apology*.[3] However, from Vaggione's thesis I draw the working conclusion that a proper reading of Gregory's Book Three requires looking through his text into three texts that lie behind (or beneath) it, each such text penetrating into the next: Eunomius's original *Apology*, Basil's *Contra Eunomium*, and Eunomius's *Second Apology*.

In *CE* III 6 Gregory offers a number of arguments that modern scholars recognize as characteristically and distinctively "Gregorian": for example, Gregory's list of the four senses of "generate" and their analogical application to Trinitarian aetiology; his description of the relationship between Father and Son as a "koinonia"; his division of all being into *uncreated* and *created* (as opposed to the polar ontological categories of *uncaused* and *caused* that go back to Parmenides); his description of the divine life as *adiastemic*; and his strong assimilation of God's productive capacity to his being. I would add to this list that in this work Gregory gives the definitive pro-Nicene exegesis of *Heb* 1,3. Furthermore, I will suggest, at the end of this essay, that in *CE* III 6 Gregory employs a previously unremarked upon rhetorical-polemical strategy for dealing with those bishops who prior to 381 had been "on the wrong side"—a strategy of his own making.

To begin properly, we should notice that Part Six of Book Three represents Gregory returning to the more Trinitarian subject matter of the first two parts

3 Vaggione's hypothesis is subject to verification or falsification.

of Book Three, and a turning away from the Christological questions that have been the subject matter of Parts Three to Five. Nyssa cites so little of Eunomius in Part Six that it is impossible to say with certainty that his return to Trinitarian matters is an effect of his following the order of the work by Eunomius he is refuting. The Eunomian statement that drives Gregory's argument in Part Six is that *before the Son was generated He did not exist*. Some of the arguments and key concepts that Gregory employs in Part Six are to be found in Parts One and Two of Book Three. In Part Six, for example, Gregory denies any *diastema* between the Father and Son; he rejects the notion of any passion in the divine generation; he builds upon the logic of the unity of existent and power; and he speaks of the *koinonia* between the Father and Son: these are all arguments he made earlier in Parts One and Two of Book Three. It is, I believe, Gregory himself who decides to return to the questions surfaced in Parts One and Two, and not Gregory merely following the twists and turns in the text written by Eunomius. I have the very tentative suspicion that Gregory's return to the questions he had treated earlier is the result of his having read more writings on the Trinity after he finished Parts One and Two and had dealt with Eunomius's Christology in succeeding parts.

Gregory begins at 23 by quoting Eunomius's words that before His begetting, the Only Begotten did not exist, and that the Only Begotten exists before all other things. For Gregory, the key proposition here by Eunomius is that God the Word once was not (24–26).[4] Gregory replies that Eunomius's doctrine can be refuted by properly understanding what "generation" means. Here, at lines 27–31, Gregory gives his well-known four senses of generation. First, "generation" is used of material production by a craft or art (as when in *On Perfection* Gregory says that creation was "generated" by God). Second, "generation" is used of reproduction by a biological nature. Third, "generation" is used of a production that neither requires nor produces change in the cause (such as radiance or fragrance), and, fourth, the word is used where the cause is immaterial but the effect is material (e.g., the immaterial mind produces a sensible, spoken word).

The first and the second senses of generation were recognized earlier by Eunomius in his *Apology* and presumably in the *Second Apology*: to call God "Father" does not include the notions of passion and material, as it does for humans; we do not mean by calling God "Spirit" what we mean by calling the angels "spirits". So too, when we call the Son "offspring" and "thing made" the sense of these terms is determined by the fact that the Son alone

4 All English-language quotations in this essay of Book Three are taken from Stuart Hall's new translation.

is the offspring and thing made directly by God's will. Everything else is made by the Son.[5]

Eunomius's account of analogical attribution is, in fact, disingenuous. The first analogical predication that Eunomius speaks of is the one between God and creation, but he then offers these examples as the basis for an analogical predication between the Son and the rest of creation. Eunomius argues that since everyone agrees that God is not a father in a physical, passionate way, and yet still we piously call him Father and mean it in some way, then it follows that we understand predicates of the Son (such as "thing made") differently than when they are attributed to creation in general. If we use the term "Father" with some sense other than its literal or ordinary one, then all terms used of the "Son" are used with senses other than their literal or ordinary ones. Eunomius point here is that if we call the Son a "thing made" we do not mean that He is a "thing made" with the same sense that everything else that is called "thing made" is so called.

When we compare Gregory's list of the four senses of generation to the two types of aetiologies Eunomius refers to when he speaks of God, namely, maker and father, we see immediately that Gregory's development is to add the third and fourth types of aetiologies, namely, a production that neither requires nor produces change in the cause (such as radiance or fragrance), and production where the cause is immaterial but the effect is material (most notably, a word).

The third kind of cause, i.e., radiance or emission, *apaugasma*, corrects our understanding of begetting by making clear that we are thinking of a generation in which the begotten is *from* the Father and always *with* the Father, the way a scent is from an odor and always with the odor. This combination of "from" and "with" guarantees that there is no *diastema* between the Father and the Son. Gregory previously made the argument in *CE* III 1 that there is no *diastema* between the Father and the Son, but there his argument is based upon the *immateriality* of the Father. This is a different argument, one I will return to momentarily.

The fourth type of generation, namely, where the cause is immaterial but the effect is material, is exemplified principally in the word. When Gregory applies this kind of aetiology to the Trinity he says specifically that the term "Word" (Logos) is not taken from ordinary usage, but from the prologue to the Gospel of John. The first line of the prologue names all the relationships implicit in the emission model of generation: the Word is with the Father, from the Father; the Word is with and from the Father *from the beginning*. Eunomius's original *Apology*, however, contains no references to *John* 1,1: indeed, Eunomius never

5 *Apology* 16–17 (Vaggione 52–55).

refers to the Second Person as the Logos in that entire work.[6] The "third book" of the *Second Apology* as provided through Gregory's quotations contains no citations of *John* 1,1. Eunomius's late use of *John* 1,1 in his *Expositio* simply quotes parts of the passage, and does not offer any exegesis.[7] We thus may have reason to believe that it was Basil and Gregory who introduced *John* 1,1, perhaps following Basil of Ancyra.[8]

I return now to Gregory's third type of generation: radiance or emission. The relative prepositions in *John* 1,1 state in the specific case of the Word the aetiology which is stated in a more general way in the third type of cause. This type of cause is the paradigmatic aetiology of "with and from"—which is what Gregory wishes us to take from the physical illustrations. Gregory first referred to this kind of causality in lines 12–14, his argument there being the Son replicates the entirety of the Father's existence just as radiance replicates the sun; just as there is no dark side of the sun, there is also no shadow in the Father's Image, the Son: he is a complete image of the Father. This is Gregory's exegesis of *Heb* 1,3, which he quotes at line 12. Language from *Heb* 1,3 shows up in Gregory's description of the third kind of generation—namely, "radiance of glory"—but the most important—and most lengthy—working of the Hebrews passage comes in lines 50–53a. At this point in III 6 Gregory again quotes Eunomius saying that the Son "did not exist before his own beginning"—and then Gregory offers a coup de grace criticism: if Eunomius maintains that the Son had a beginning, then he is proposing a light that did not always shine, that is, a light that was not always able to shine.

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6 Sesboué remarks as much in *Basile de Cesarée, Contre Eunome*, SC 305, Paris 1983, 63, n. 2.

7 There is, however, an interpretation of the title Logos that is attributed to Eunomius by Cyril of Alexandria in his *Thesaurus*: there are five fragments provided by Cyril as *Assertio* XIX. (See Vaggione, *Eunomius: The Extant Works*, 183–184). In those fragments Eunomius rejects Logos as an appropriate title for the second person for a number of reasons: e.g., a word has no real, separate existence; the Son is not to be identified with any one property of the Father such as Word, Power or Wisdom, because these properties have no separate existence. These arguments sound anti-Marcellan or anti-Photinian; I suspect that they are statements late in Eunomius'scareer, after he returns from exile in 370 and aligns himself for political reasons with the Homoians, whose bread and butter was anti-Marcellan and anti-Photinian theology.

8 It is important that we take note of the way Basil and Gregory emphasize the relationships of the Word *from* God and *with* God. Reading *John* 1,1 for its relative prepositions has a history in the Marcellan controversy: Marcellus read *John* 1,1 as if it said that the Word was *in* God; Eusebius of Caesarea pointed out that no such preposition occurs in the line, and that the relationship communicated to us by John is that of the Word *with* God. See Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical Theology* II 14. Gregory's focus upon the Eusebian and the anti-Marcellan emphasis on "the Word *with* God" is more sustained than Basil's (at *Against Eunomius* II 11–17.)

Gregory's argument turns on his understanding that the author of Hebrews—the "Apostle"—has described the Son's relationship to the Father by the analogy of a power to an existent: as long as the existent is what it is, it has this affective power by which it is identified and without which it ceases to be itself. Gregory asks Eunomius how we can imagine a light without radiance that is still a light. On the contrary, a light qua light must shine, and God qua God must have His Power, the Son. The question of the full and co-eternity of the Son turns out to be resolved as a question of power physics through the authority of *Heb* 1,3. This is not a weak solution: the identification of glory with light is traditional, and is indeed very strong in the theology of Gregory of Nazianzus. The continuity between source and light that Gregory gleams from *apaugasma* and his scriptural examples seem to result from a plain sense reading of the text, which results in an elegant doctrinal combination of technical philosophy and common sense. If we add to the fact of the strong role *Heb* 1,3 plays in Gregory's polemical exegesis the fact of the importance of *Heb* 1,3 for Origen's Trinitarian theology, then we can see that the scriptural passage is an important one to claim for one's own Trinitarian theology.[9]

In point of fact, in the extant literature Eunomius never suggests that we imagine the case of a light that does not always shine; so far as we know, Eunomius never exegeted *Heb* 1,3, much less confronted the contradiction to which Gregory points.[10] Eunomius would have recognized the example as a case of power physics, and, as I have argued elsewhere,[11] his notion of divine aetiology does not attribute this kind of causality to God: God's nature is not and cannot be productive. The absence of any such arguments from *Heb* 1,3 in Eunomius's theology gies rise to a question: is Gregory simply indulging himself in rhetorical hyperbole? Is Gregory's voiced suspicion that someone might propose a light that does not shine, an odor with no fragrance, a case of Gregory playing out a *reductio ad absurdum*? The answer to those questions turns out to be "No" if we look farther afield than Eunomius. I quote now from Eusebius of Caesarea's *Proof of the Gospel*:

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9 *On First Principles* I 2,8. See my account of Origen's doctrine of the generation of the Son—and the role of *Heb* 1,3 in that account—in M. R. Barnes, *The Power of God, Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington, D.C. 2001, 111–124.

10 For a possible exception to this statement, see the last fragment in Cyril's *Assertio* viii, in which Eunomius may be arguing against an interpretation of the scriptural passage like Gregory's. Vaggione (*The Extant Works*, 182, in note 3) says only that in the fragment Eunomius is "perhaps" alluding to *Heb* 1,3.

11 Again see my "The Background and Use of Eunomius' Causal Language", here p. 235.

> For he is the radiance of the eternal light, and the unblurred mirror of his activity, and the image of his goodness. [Here Eusebius quotes *Heb* 1,3.] Except that the radiance is inseparable from the light of sense, while the Son exists in Himself in his own essence apart from the Father. And the ray has its range of activity solely from the light, whereas the Son is something different from a channel of energy, having his being in himself. And, moreover, the ray is coexistent with the light, being a kind of complement thereof (for there could be no light without a ray): they exist together and simultaneously. But the Father precedes the Son, and has preceded him in existence, inasmuch as he alone is unbegotten . . .[12]

In short, Eusebius cites *Heb* 1,3 and says: The Son is generated as radiance from a light, except that radiance is coexistent with light, and we do not believe any analogous thing about the Son's relation to the Father: a fragrance never begins, but the Son does. Eunomius never made this argument, but Eusebius did. Gregory has restated in a doctrine of Eunomius's in the language of Eusebius of Caesarea and the Homoian theology that flowed from him through Acacius. Gregory has read Eusebius off Eunomius: the original *Apology* is no longer the first layer of reference in the inter-textual reading of Gregory's *Against Eunomius* III 6; Eusebius of Caesarea's *Proof of the Gospel* is. The immediate result of this reading is to transform Eunomius's statement into one that utilizes power causality in contradiction to itself, which is what Eusebius's argument does. The other effect is to bring Eusebian theology into the debate with Eunomius, a point I will return to below.

Both Gregory and Eusebius use the exegesis of *Heb* 1,3 to connect their account of divine generation to their understanding of what the term "monogenes" means. Eusebius's judgment is that "monogenes" means that there is only one Son, just as there is only one fragrance from its source.

> . . . the Son of a Father who is one must also be one. For we should have to agree that from the one fragrance of any particular object that breathes it forth, the sweet odor shed forth on all is one and the same, not diverse and many . . . while the sweet odor that is begotten, possessing its own character, imitates in the highest degree possible the nature of that which produced it by its own fragrance . . .[13]

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12 *Proof of the Gospel* IV 3 (148d), trans. W. J. Ferrar (ed.), *Proof of the Gospel*, London 1920, 167–168. Eusebius's exegesis of *Heb* 1,3 begins at IV 3 (147b).

13 *Proof of the Gospel* 148d, p. 168.

Not everyone would agree that a fragrance *imitates* its source: this is Eusebius dissembling against the power physics of *Heb* 1,3 just as he did earlier when he said that the Son is to the Father as a radiance is to a light—except that radiance always accompanies light but the Son does not always exist with the Father. (There is more unity between radiance and a light, or fragrance and its source, than there is between the Son and the Father.) Eusebius's argument then is that we learn from *Heb* 1,3 that the Father has no other Son because by his uniqueness the Son reflects the oneness of God: mono-genes is the correlate to mono-theism.

By contrast, in lines 41–45 Gregory *explicitly* argues that the term "monogenes" refers to a unique type of generation which shares no properties with other types of generation, except by analogy. Gregory *implicitly* argues that the term "theos" refers to a unique type of being with shares no properties with other kinds of being. In each case the class answering to the term is occupied by one member: in neither case can one speak of a degree or kind of the class. The term "monogenes" cannot be attributed to an existent on the basis of it being a kind of only-begotten; the term "theos" cannot be attributed to an existent on the basis of it being a kind of God. Gregory's insistence on the univocal sense of "only begotten" and "God" stand against Eunomius's argument that "theos" can be used in two senses: the unbegotten God and the Begotten God. Gregory argues that there is either God or there is not-God. Similarly, the term monogenes means that no form of generation that describes any other case but the Son of God can be used literally of the Son's generation: all attributions of shared generation are used of the Son's origin only by analogy or simile. Emanation is to light as the origin of the Son is to God. Scripture provides the analogies, exegesis controls the limit of each analogy. The correct way to understand each kind of generation is by interpreting it in the light of all the other kinds of generations offered by Scripture: "beget" is interpreted in the light of "emanate" which is interpreted in the light of "made". This kind of exegetical binding is endorsed by Origen when he discusses, in his *Commentary on John*, the different titles used of the Son. Origen complains that some people have chosen the name "Logos" as their preferred title for the Son, and use it as a sufficient name: Origen is complaining about either the Apologists or the Monarchians or presuppositions they have in common. Origen argues that the title Logos is truly scripturally-based only when it is understood in relationship with all the other scriptural titles for the Second Person.[14] Gregory is using a similar argument: any given scriptural term for the Son's generation must be understood in relationship with all the other scriptural terms for the Second

14 *Commentary on John* I 123–157.

Person's generation. One uses the whole class of titles or terms not because each is ultimately synonymous with the other, but because each title is different. Eunomius, by contrast, argues that "make", "create", and "beget" are in fact synonymous.[15]

Gregory's understanding of the unique character of the way the Father causes the Son is part of his response to another aspect of the problem of speaking about the Father as the origin of the Son: there is in the tradition no word which refers exclusively to the divine form of production—every term used of the Son's origination is used for other origins. The fact that there is no received term for divine production—that is, no word used only and exclusively for divine production—means that no single terms can be identified with the unique act of divine production. This, I think, is why Gregory's description of the different ways "generate" can be used of God is momentarily shocking to a post-Nicene reader: we expect there to be a term used for no other causality. This expectation fueled premature scholarly discoveries of the existence of a distinction between *gennetos* and *genetos*. However, what eventually occurs in pro-Nicene polemic is the reservation of a word for this unique act, and what occurs in anti-Nicene polemic is the declining of such a reservation: for Eunomius, as, coincidentally, for Arius, "beget" and "create" can be used interchangeably, as long as neither term means exactly the same thing when used of the Second Person as when used of all other existents.

For Gregory (in lines 41–45) when the four analogical cases of generation are taken together they give us, through their mutual-correction, the notion of a kind of generation which is unique, which is unlike each of the four individual types of generation, and indeed unlike all other kinds of generation. We arrive at a notion of generation which we can apply to nothing else but the Son, which is what pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology needs: the title "Only Begotten" means that nothing else is generated in the same way as the Son is generated—the aetiology of His origin has no other instance.[16] Statements like "a creature, but not as other creatures" can now be seen in their full equivocation.

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15 See R. Vaggione, "Οὐχ ὡς ἓν τῶν γεννημάτων: Some Aspects of Dogmatic Formulae in the Arian Controversy", *StPatr* 17 (1982) 181–187.

16 The Nicene reservation—or reduction—of divine generation to one term causes problems in the development of pneumatology: if there is a unique act of divine production, and "begotten" names it, then what is left over for the origin of the Holy Spirit? Another "unique" form of divine production and another univocal term naming it? It is true of language that we can have a term for "something I know not what": for some linguistic theorists that insight provides the meaning of the word "noun". "Spiration" is an agreed-upon term for an act that is very nearly "something I know not what": without the high confidence of the kind of meaning attached to the term "begotten" Pro-Nicene

The last point I want to make about Gregory's account of divine aetiology comes from a glossing of his argument at lines 66–80, where Gregory introduces the distinction between uncreated and created being, a distinction that loomed large in *CE* Book One. *All things that exist can be divided into two classes*, Gregory says: *created and divine*. It is the mark of the created to have a beginning, middle, and end. If we attribute even one distinguishing feature of created things to the divine *ousia*, all other attributes of creation follow, since any one such attribution places divinity in the realm of antinomies—that God has no opposites, no more or less. Here Gregory restates his more usual term of "uncreated" as "divine". The distinction between divine and created is offered without the second, coaxial antinomies of intellectual and material. Uncreated and created are used here as ontological or aetiological categories: there are no moral or psychological connotations. Gregory is positing mutually exclusive categories of caused and uncaused, the former drawing its existence from the latter, the latter causing the existence of the former. This is a peculiar argument for Gregory to make at this point, since he has already given us his list of four senses of generate, at least three of which he applies, albeit analogically, to the origin of the Son. It is peculiar argument to appear now because Gregory means to locate the Son squarely on the side of the divine, uncreated, uncaused, although he has just given us ways to think of the Son as caused. However, as we continue to read we discover that Gregory has identified *caused* with *created* via the axiom that *everything created has a beginning*—as well as a middle and an end. Gregory's emphasis on the non-diastemic aetiology between a light and its brilliance, or an odor with its fragrance, then comes to the fore logically. If the generation of the Son was (or is) continuous with the existence of the Father, then the Son has no more a beginning than the Father does: he has an origin, but he does not have a beginning. Lacking duration, the Son is neither "caused" nor "created" according to the sense that Gregory has given these terms. In a way this argument by Gregory was already accomplished in *CE* III 1, when Gregory argued that in divine generation there is no diastema between Father and Son. Whatever Eusebius of Caesarea said, neither is there any diastema between light and its brilliance. Just as importantly, whatever Origen taught about the character of divine productivity, there is an interval of will between God's nature and some of His products, that is, those products we generally call created. Created things may be said metaphorically to await the gift of existence, for their existence must indeed be given to them by God at some point in time.

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pneumatology comes dangerously close to asking for a belief in two "I know not what" aetiologies that are nonetheless distinct.

Against Eunomius III 6 is the first of three of Gregory's anti-Eunomian writings that feature the exegesis of *Heb* 1,3 in support of the doctrine of the Son's full co-eternalness with the Father. The second text is Gregory's *Refutatio*, written late 383 or early 384. In this work, Gregory makes the now-familiar argument that *Heb* 1,3 testifies that the Son was always with the Father, for to say otherwise requires the assertion that light can be without radiance.

> Before the brightness neither was there any glory, for concurrently with the existence of the glory there assuredly bears forth its brightness; and it is impossible in the nature of things that one should be severed from the other, nor is it possible to see the glory by itself before its brightness. . . .[17]

The third anti-Eunomian writing in which Gregory argues for the doctrine of the Son's full co-eternalness with the Father on the basis of the aetiology described in *Heb* 1,3 is his short work *De Fide ad Simplicium*, for which there seems to be no scholarly consensus as to its date, except that it is post 381. In that work Gregory argues that the Father is never without the Son, for it is impossible that glory should be without radiance, as it is impossible that the lamp should be without brightness. I believe that *De Fide* dates from shortly after the *Refutatio* on the basis of the maturity of its pneumatology, but I have no strong judgment that *De Fide* follows, rather than immediately precedes, the *Refutatio*. The one point about dating the text that I do want to insist upon is that *CE* III 6, the *Refutatio*, and the *De Fide* were written near in time and share the same argument for the Son's eternity, an argument that does not occur—it goes almost without saying—in other polemical Trinitarian writings by Gregory, such as *Contra Eunomium* I and II, and short works such as *On Not Three Gods*.[18] *CE* III 6 is written after Constantinople, 381; the *Refutatio* is written after the emperor's call for creeds in 383.[19]

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17 See *Ref.* 10 (GNO II 355,17).

18 At *Perf.* (GNO VIII.1 188) Gregory cites *Heb* 1,3, and understands "splendor" to refer to the union between Father and Son (Gregory goes on to cite *Phil* 2,5–7.) While Gregory understands the passage as testifying to the unity and equality of the Father and Son, he does not present the passage as describing a divine aetiology.

19 Gregory does refer to *Heb* 1,3 and the radiance model for the begetting of the Son in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. His comments there suggest that the original polemical use of the passage was not Gregory's; rather, that Gregory came across this exegetical argument in the writings of another author. I believe that that author was Athanasius; I say this as a scholar with no commitment to a narrative that has Athanasius as the font of "Nicene" theology and which thus presumes his influence upon the Cappadocians. It would be best for me to say that Gregory discovering a sympathetic polemical exegesis of

At the beginning of this article I promised to reveal Gregory employing a rhetorical-polemical strategy of his own making for dealing with those bishops who prior to 381 had been "on the wrong side". Of course, the most famous rhetorical-polemical strategy used by a fourth century bishop of Nicene sympathies was Athanasius's reduction of his opponents to "followers of Arius" or "Ariomaniacs". Whatever the historical merit of Athanasius's reduction—and there is little—he was able to argue from the position that whatever his opponents thought they believed, in fact their position reduced to that of Arius. This charge required a refutation by Athanasius's opponents—something more substantial than the argument at Antioch, 341, that no bishop followed the theology of a presbyter. For my present purposes the key feature of Athanasius's "invention of Arianism" is that Athanasius rhetorically divided the Trinitarian world into "with him" or "against him"—and those "against him" were cast out until they had taken positive steps to become part of the solution and not part of the problem. I have shown elsewhere[20] that most Greeks of Nicene sympathy—including certainly the Cappadocians—did not use Athanasius's strategy. Moreover, there is no Greek Nicene strategy of reducing the theology of one's opponent to that of Eunomius. Gregory is a good example of the non-use of this strategy: he never says that whatever his opponents thought they believed, in fact their position reduced to that of Eunomius. This discretionary silence is maintained by Gregory even while he refutes doctrines that have nothing to do with Eunomius's theology all under the heading of "against Eunomius".

My conclusion is that Gregory intentionally refutes Eusebian and Homoian theology under the umbrella of refuting Eunomius while never suggesting a link between those theologies and Eunomius'. His purpose is to give his opponents an opportunity to disclaim their own discredited theology, which was under Imperial condemnation since 381, by declaring the problematic doctrines as "Eunomian": thereby siding, without humiliation, with Gregory and the winning side at Constantinople, 381. We know from the episode of Gregory's forged letters between Basil and his uncle Gregory that he abhorred confrontation. We know from numerous episodes that Basil had no such scruples. We also know that Gregory was thought to be too accommodating to members of condemned

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Heb 1,3 in Athanasius's theology may be the only case of Athanasian influence that I can presently recognize.

20 M. R. Barnes, "The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon", in: L. Ayres – G. Jones (eds.), *Theology, Rhetoric and Community, Studies in Christian Origins*, I, London, New York 1997, 47–67, here 56–61.

theological parties, for following Antioch, 379, Gregory was accused of the very thing of which Basil accused Paulinus in ep. 263—namely, accepting followers of Marcellus into communion indiscriminately. (See Gregory's ep. 5) I am thus proposing this hypothesis: that after 381 Gregory argued in such a way as to give repentant non-Nicenes a way to condemn their old errors without having to acknowledge those errors as their own.[21] There is a precedent for the contrast I am drawing between Athanasius's and Gregory's methods of dealing with those bishops who had been, in the past, on the wrong side: in the West Lucifer of Caligari argued that those bishops who had signed the Imperially sanctioned creeds of 359–360 were to be deposed; Hilary of Poitiers argued that those bishops should be given a chance to sign the Nicene creed. Lucifer's strategy failed miserably to unseat the Homoian bishop Auxentius of Milan, and thereafter Hilary's tactic became the norm, at which point Lucifer schismed. Gregory's approach is like Hilary's, not like Athanasius's, Basil's, or Lucifer's. I do not mean to resurrect the hoary old cliché of Basil as the "mean Cappadocian" and Gregory as the "nice Cappadocian": I mean to say that Basil and Gregory responded to their defeated opponents differently, and, more importantly, a rhetorical response crafted in the pre-381 reality might not function effectively in a post-381 reality. I present this thesis about Gregory's rhetorical-polemical strategy in *CE* III as a way of raising the question of what is Gregory's rhetorical strategy after 381, that is, how does Book III reflect the new reality of anti-Nicene theology generally being in eclipse and Eunomius in particular being past his political crest.[22]

Book Three of Gregory *Contra Eunomium* is a complex work, not only in terms of the variety of texts it responds to simultaneously, but in terms of the variety of doctrinal themes it addresses. Furthermore, while the theology of Eunomius is undoubtedly the work's principal target, it also engages a broad field of opponents, some of whom Gregory wants to refute and drive out of the

21 I believe that if Basil had been alive in 381 there might not have been a "concord" of western and eastern pro-Nicenes in that year, given that the two episcopates the emperor held up as normative in Trinitarian theology were bishops that Basil specifically refused to have full communion with: the sees of Rome and Alexandria. One may argue that later Theodosius did not place the same emphasis on communion with Rome and Alexandria as he did in 381, but any such later change of emphasis does not negate the fact that in 380–381, Theodosius did indeed regard these two sees as normative. (See the Imperial promulgations in the Theodosian Code for February 28, 380, and July 30, 381.)

22 See R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000, 324–330.

Church; others of whom, if I am right, Gregory wants refute and return to communion. This motivation on Gregory's part, its relation to the post-381 Imperial and ecclesiastical environments, as well as the pronounced inter-textual character of *Contra Eunomium* III, raise for us questions on the substantial role of rhetorical strategies in the work. The theological depth and breadth of this book surpasses anything that Gregory had written before it.

Time, Eternity, and the Generation of the Son: *Contra Eunomium* III 7

Johan Leemans

1 Introduction

With only 23 pages in Jaeger's GNO-edition book 7 is one of the shortest of *CE* III. Thematically it continues the reflection of the previous book about the begetting of the Son and what this means for his relationship to the Father. In *CE* III 7 especially the time-issue is central: Gregory is adamant in underlining that there is no 'before' or 'after' within the deity; that there is no distance whatsoever between Father and Son.

Just like other parts of *CE* III, this book too has a strong refutational character. Essentially, Gregory starts from quotations, paraphrases or brief summaries of Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* to demonstrate in great detail why his opponent is wrong. The structure of Gregory's argumentation is therefore to a considerable extent determined by this 'dialogue' with Eunomius.[1] This results in an overall meandering structure which is not so easy to follow. The continuous back and forth between the two opponents is reinforced by the frequent use of oppositional logic. Very often Gregory's argumentation proceeds on the basis of presenting two mutually exclusive alternatives so that acceptance of one automatically results in a rejection of the other.

With only about a dozen of instances,[2] Scriptural quotations and allusions are used in *CE* III 7 less frequently than in other parts of *CE* III and really much too minimal to influence the structure of this part of his work. No extensive interpretations of key-verses here but a rather sparing use of biblical

1 M. Cassin, "Contre Eunome III: L'exégèse structure-t-elle l'argumentation?", in: M. Cassin – H. Grelier (eds.), *Grégoire de Nysse: la bible dans la construction de son discours. Actes du Colloque de Paris, 9–10 février 2007*, Paris 2008, 73–88; M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse: polémique littéraire et exégèse dans le* Contre Eunome, Paris 2012, 24–28.

2 *CE* III 7,2 (*John* 1:1 [GNO II 215,13–14]); *CE* III 7,23 (*Psalms* 54:20 [GNO II 223,11]); *CE* III 7,40 (*Psalms* 125:2 [GNO II 229,22]; *Luke* 22:35 [GNO II 229,22–23]; *Matthew* 25:1 [GNO II 229,23]); *CE* III 7,43 (*John* 10:38; *John* 14:10 [GNO II 230,20–21]); *CE* III 7,51 (*Acts* 3:15; *John* 14:6 [GNO II 232,28]); *CE* III 7,52 (*John* 14:10 [GNO II 233,21]); *CE* III 7,56 (*Genesis* 1:1 sqq [GNO II 234,25–26]).

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borrowings. Usually they fit and reinforce the argumentation but one doesn't get the feeling that it is his major source of inspiration.

There is not so much room for Scripture in III 7 but there is, in line with his elder brother Basil, much more attention to polemical, dismissive language, against Eunomius in person, or against him and his supporters.[3] In some longer passages Gregory gives his polemical language and creativity free rein. As we will see, the opening of III 7 provides a beautiful example but also later on one cannot but admire Gregory's polemical ingenuity. What to think of a passage such as the following: "Who is so free from the concerns of life that he can devote himself to listening to the nonsense of our opponents' words and our battle with nonsensical things? Yet, because for those seized with impiety, the deceit, like a deep and wash-resistant dye, is imprinted in the depth of their hearts, let us apply just a little more effort to our argument, in case we can cleanse their minds of this evil stain of theirs".[4] Thus, he denounces his opponent's views as nonsense while at the same time making the transition to the next part of his argument. Something similar happens at III 7,55, where Gregory is making the transition to the final part of III 7: "The shadow-boxing of our adversaries about the term 'unbegottenness', vainly based on non-existence, is a quite futile error. However, if there is further need to drag into the open the whole absurdity of the book, let a little more time be given to the debate".[5]

Besides these more extensive examples, placed at key points in the flow of the argument, this strategy of denunciation and rejection is also sustained by the use of a polemical terminology throughout the writing: Eunomius' "new philosophy", or, ironically, his "scientific method"; Eunomius is "the wordsmith", he is exhibiting "lack of original thoughts".[6] All of this is not new and it is also present in the other books of the *CE* III but it is good to underline it once more. After all, this polemical language helps to create and support the unquestioned proposition that he (Gregory) is representing the "correct"

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3 See M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse*, 57–111 for a systematic survey.

4 *CE* III 7,24: τίς γὰρ τοσοῦτον εὔσχολος ἐκ τῶν τοῦ βίου φροντίδων ὡς ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἑαυτὸν δοῦναι τῇ ἀκροάσει τῆς τε ματαιότητος τῶν ὑπεναντίων λόγων καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας πρὸς τὰ μάταια πράγματα μάχης; ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τοῖς προειλημμένοις τῇ ἀσεβείᾳ καθάπερ τις δευσοποιὸς βαφὴ καὶ δυσέκνιπτος ἡ ἀπάτη καὶ διὰ βάθους ταῖς καρδίαις ἐγκέκαυται, μικρὸν ἔτι τῷ λόγῳ προσδιατρίψωμεν, εἴ πως δυνηθείημεν τῆς πονηρᾶς αὐτῶν ταύτης κηλῖδος τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπορρύψαι (GNO II 223,18–26).

5 *CE* III 7,54–55: καὶ μάτην διαπλανᾶται τῶν πολεμούντων ἡμῖν ἡ περὶ τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς ἀγεννησίας σκιαμαχία διὰ τῶν ἀνυπάρκτων κενεμβατοῦσα. Μᾶλλον δὲ εἰ χρὴ πᾶσαν εἰς τὸ ἐμφανὲς ἀγαγεῖν τὴν ἀτοπίαν τοῦ λόγου, μικρὸν ἔτι συγχωρηθήτω προσδιατρίψαι τῷ θεωρήματι (GNO II 234,6–11).

6 Respectively *CE* III 7,7 (τὴν νέαν σοφίαν [GNO II 217,13]); *CE* III 7,22 (ἐκ τῆς τεχνικῆς ἐφόδου [GNO II 222,21]); *CE* III 7,7 (τοῦ λογογράφου [GNO II 217,15–16]; also in *CE* III 7,8 [GNO II 217,20.25] and *CE* III 7,37 [GNO II 228,19]); *CE* III 7,8 (ἡ κλοπὴ [GNO II 217,22]).

theological view regarding the divinity of the Son whereas his opponent is not. Thus, it is much more than an obligate flourishing: it adds on a very substantial level to the persuasive power of the *CE* III.

Besides its refutational character, the sparing use of the Bible, and its strongly polemical tone, also the historical-literary background should not be forgotten. *CE* III is the final element in an exchange in which not only Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* is crucial but also Basil of Caesarea's *Contra Eunomium*, as the piece to which Eunomius was reacting in his *Apologia apologiae*. With regard to *CE* III 7 there seems to be much continuity: much subject matter had already been discussed in Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* and, before this, already in Basil's *CE* II.[7]

In what follows, I will present the main lines of Gregory's argumentation. I will follow the subdivision in sections proposed in Stuart Hall's translation because it closely follows the indications for subdivisions Gregory is providing himself by introductory words or sentences.[8]

2 Eunomius' Fine Words About the Supremacy of God (1–7a)

Gregory opens *CE* III 7 in medias res, continuing his 'dialogue' with Eunomius at the point where the previous part had ended. In doing so, he mixes polemical language, irony, and a logical argumentation with which one cannot but agree:

> Still Eunomius goes on to more high-flown language, elevates himself, and tries to say with hollow pride something worthy of the majesty of God. His words are like this: 'For God,' he says, 'being the supremest Good of all, and superior to all, and free from all necessity . . .'[9] (1).

Gregory stops his quotation from Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* here because he senses an opportunity. Ironically he says: "How well the generous fellow

7 See the survey in M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse*, 29.

8 Cf. *CE* III 7,7: ὃ νῦν εἰς ἀπόδειξιν τῆς ἀγχινοίας τοῦ λογογράφου ἐπαναλαβὼν ἀναγνώσομαι (GNO II 217,15–16); *CE* III 7,24: μικρὸν ἔτι τῷ λόγῳ προσδιατρίψωμεν (GNO II 223,24–25); *CE* III 7,55: μικρὸν ἔτι συγχωρηθήτω προσδιατρίψαι τῷ θεωρήματι (GNO II 234,10–11).

9 *CE* III 7,1: Ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τοὺς ὑψηλοτέρους μετέρχεται λόγους καὶ μετεωρίσας ἑαυτὸν καὶ ὀγκώσας ἐν διακένῳ φυσήματι λέγειν ἐπιχειρεῖ τι τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ μεγαλοπρεπείας ἐπάξιον. ὃ δὲ λέγει τοιοῦτόν ἐστι. θεὸς γὰρ ὤν, φησί, τὸ πάντων ἐξοχώτατον ἀγαθὸν καὶ πάντων κράτιστον καὶ πάσης ἀνάγκης ἐλεύθερον (GNO II 213,1–8).

(…) brings his book to anchor in the haven of truth!"[10] In speaking about God as the supremest Good (τὸ ἐξοχώτατον ἀγαθὸν), Eunomius had of course the Father, the Unbegotten in mind. Referring to *John* 1:1, however, Gregory also includes the Son, the Only-begotten in the "supremest Good" Eunomius was speaking about. Thus, with the help of the *locus classicus John* 1:1 Gregory turns Eunomius' quotation into an argument that supports his own viewpoint. He also hastens to add that the term "supremest" applies to Father *and* Son and that the superlative does not allow for any comparative meaning. There is no room for "lesser" or "greater" in God. One senses that, while writing his refutation, Gregory is on his guard to defend himself against a potential counter-attack, probably along the lines that the superlative "supremest" indicates exactly such a comparative degree within the Godhead (2).

But Eunomius had more to say about the supremacy of God. Gregory refers to it as "his subsequent argument" (τὸν ἐφεξῆς αὐτοῦ λόγον). Since there is also similarity in theme and vocabulary (supremest good—free of necessity), this suggests that in Eunomius' work the quotation followed almost immediately after the previous one:[11]

> God, the supremest Good, inasmuch as no nature obstructs, nor cause compels, nor need impinges, both generates and creatively designs, in accordance with the supremacy of his own authority, having sufficient power to constitute the things that are made. If therefore all is good in accordance with his purpose, he decrees not only that what is made is good, but *when* it is good that it be made, if it is in fact a sign of weakness to do what one does not intend[12] (3).

In his response, Gregory of course agrees with ascribing freedom of action and initiative to God and he also concurs that God's creation is good. Moreover, he continues his argument that the supremest Good is not just the Unbegotten

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10 *CE* III 7,1: καλῶς ὁ γεννάδας (…) τῷ λιμένι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐγκαθορμίζει τὸν λόγον (GNO II 213,8–11).

11 Such "cross-references" in situating his reader within Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* by pointing out he is moving to a subsequent passage or a previous one are not exceptional. They may be found throughout the entire *CE* I–III (list in R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius: The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 92).

12 *CE* III 7,3: φησὶ γὰρ ὅτι τὸ ἐξοχώτατον ἀγαθόν, ὁ θεός, ἅτε μήτε φύσεως ἐμποδιζούσης μήτε αἰτίας ἀναγκαζούσης μήτε χρείας κατεπειγούσης, γεννᾷ τε καὶ δημιουργεῖ κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἰδίας ἐξουσίας ὑπεροχὴν τὴν βούλησιν ἀρκοῦσαν ἔχων δύναμιν πρὸς τὴν τῶν γινομένων σύστασιν. εἰ τοίνυν πᾶν καλὸν κατὰ τὴν τούτου βούλησιν, οὐ μόνον τὸ γενόμενον ὁρίζει καλόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅτε γενέσθαι καλόν, εἴπερ ἄρα ἀσθενείας τὸ ποιεῖν ὃ μὴ βούλεται (GNO II 216,3–12).

but also includes the Only-begotten. And also with regard to the interpretation of this quotation it nicely fits, for he is the One through Whom creation came about. He repeats this twice: once with reference to "the Gospel"[13] and once with a borrowing of *Hebrews* 1:2 (the Only-begotten who made the ages).[14] All of this is straightforward. But his main point here is different: he is especially interested in the statement that the Creator made the creation *when he willed it* (ὅτε ἐβούλετο). In his concern to safeguard the pre-temporal existence of God he underlines that these temporal indications only apply when the Only-begotten had willed to set the temporal beginning for creation. Only then, notions such as 'before' and 'after' make sense. The divine nature itself, however, is of course without temporal extension. Envisaging the opposite "is work for those educated in the new philosophy",[15] he ends this section with biting sarcasm (7).

3 The Absurd Notion that God Controls His Own Power (7b–14)

Next Gregory moves a little bit back in the text of Eunomius to a point he had deliberately passed over.[16] The wordsmith, as he calls his opponent, wrote that the "supremest God, before the other things that are generated (*gennêta*), controls his own power".[17] Gregory's discussion with this brief passage develops in three steps.

To start with, Gregory points out that Eunomius copied this word for word from Philo. As such it doesn't come as a surprise that Gregory would have detected "plagiarism" on Eunomius' part; after all, he was well acquainted with Philo's work. Its influence can, inter alia, be detected in the *De vita Moysis* and *De hominis opificio*, in parallels between his *De virginitate* and Philo's *De vita contemplativa* as well as in certain concepts that are very similar.[18] In *CE* III 5,24

13 *CE* III 7,5: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (GNO II 216,6).

14 *CE* III 7,6: ὁ μονογενὴς ἐστι θεὸς ὁ τοὺς αἰῶνας ποιήσας (GNO II 217,2–3).

15 *CE* III 7,7: θεωρεῖν μόνων τῶν τὴν νέαν σοφίαν πεπαιδευμένων ἐστίν (GNO II 217,12–13).

16 *CE* III 7,7: οἷον γὰρ κἀκεῖνο τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἐγκείμενον ὑπερέβην ἑκών, πρὸς τὸ προκείμενον σπεύδων, ὃ νῦν εἰς ἀπόδειξιν τῆς ἀγχινοίας τοῦ λογογράφου ἐπαναλαβὼν ἀναγνώσομαι (GNO II 217,13–16). ET: "The kind of point, embedded in what he has said, which I deliberately passed over in my haste to reach my subject, I shall now take up again and spell out to demonstrate the cunning wit of our wordsmith".

17 *CE* III 7,8: Ὁ γὰρ ἐξοχώτατος αὐτοῦ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων, φησίν, ὅσα γεννητά, τῆς αὐτοῦ κρατεῖ δυνάμεως (GNO II 217,17–19).

18 M. Mira, "Philo of Alexandria", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden 2010, 601–603.

Gregory had already accused Eunomius of plagiarising Philo but it is only here, in III 7,8–9 that he presents controllable evidence. David T. Runia has checked Gregory's statement. He discovered that literally the same sentence does not occur in the extant writings of Philo and that Eunomius had probably be quoting from memory.[19]

In Gregory's opinion, Eunomius' use of Philo indicates the poverty of his own thoughts. Even more so, however, it illustrates how his theology is a kind of "new Judaism",[20] how close it is to the doctrines of the Jews. This connection between Eunomius and Judaism is not unique: Basil had already made this link quite often and Gregory himself had done this already many times before in *CE* I and II. Yet, there is no reason to make too much of Gregory's statements here: construing a lineage between a movement considered as heretical with Judaism is a common heresiological topos[21] and it is maybe not necessary to see more behind Gregory's statement here than the wish to discredit Eunomius. In his commentary on this passage, though, M. R. Barnes proposes to go a step further: Gregory would have recognized in Eunomius' ideas about God's own power (*idia dunamis*) a form of indirect causality, very similar to that in some Philonic texts.[22]

Gregory's second comment on Eunomius' text capitalises on the absurdity of the idea that God "controls his own power". What is this power that he controls? How is he doing that? In whatever way it is explained, it always means introducing within the deity a second element, an element different from God himself. This endangers divine simplicity but is also absurd in itself: it would mean that God is controlling power only insofar as he is not power! Or it could mean that God divides the power which is in him, so that one part can control the other. "Such is Eunomius' God: split in two and very complicated"[23] (10).

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19 D. T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*, Assen 1993, 244–247.

20 *CE* III 7,9: τῆς νέας Ἰουδαϊκῆς (GNO II 218,4).

21 M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse*, 100–103 with reference to earlier literature.

22 M. R. Barnes, *The Power of God: Dunamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington, DC 2001, 228–229 (referring to *De Abrahamo* 24,122 [ed. L. Cohn, *Philonis Alexandrini Opera quae supersunt*, IV, Berlin 1902, 28]; *De specialibus legibus* I 329 [ed. L. Cohn, *Philonis Alexandrini Opera quae supersunt*, V, Berlin 1906, 79] and *De mutatione nominum* 29 [ed. P. Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini Opera quae supersunt*, III, Berlin 1897, 161]). D. T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 246, is more sceptical here and suggests indirect influence.

23 *CE* III 7,10: τοιοῦτος ὁ Εὐνομίου θεός, διφυής τις ἢ πολυσύνθετος (GNO II 218,19–20). Cf. A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, New York, NY 2009, 96–112.

Even more disturbing to Gregory is the temporal element, viz. that this controlling his own power occurred *before* the existence of the other *genneta*. Apparently, Gregory concludes, Eunomius must mean that it occurred also before the generation of the Son. It would mean something intermediary—an interval so to speak—intruding between the life of the Father and that of the Son. The latter would then no longer be the direct offspring of the former. All of this is inconceivable to Gregory. Moreover, it leads to the question: if this was an entirely freely chosen initiative of the Father, who controls his own power, why then would the Son's generation have been delayed? (13–14).

4 Eunomius' Evasion About Why the Son's Generation was Deferred (15–24a)

According to Gregory, the only answer coming from Eunomius is the following:

> 'For it was right and proper,' he says, 'to beget the Son, just when he willed it, with no consequent cause for enquiry among thinking people about why it did not happen before'[24] (15).

Eunomius affirms the sovereignty of the Father's will to beget the Son on his chosen moment. It is especially the apodictic way in which his opponent blocks all further inquiry and seems to resign to the principles of logical reasoning he adhered to before, that provokes Gregory's indignation. There also is a streak of bitterness in two quotations ascribed to Eunomius in which the latter took Gregory's brother Basil to task for convicting himself to ignorance (15). In the first section of his response to Eunomius, Gregory mercilessly makes fun of him: he, the man always willing to speculate about God and use the human potential to the full, now would close every inquiry or discussion by simply saying: he did it when he willed it and let there be no further debate about it. This is valid when speaking about animals, who act by their nature; or when speaking about human beings, who have to choose from many possibilities what to do when. But this is different with regard to God, who is beyond change, variation, and acquisition. It is inconceivable that he would chose something he didn't do before, that he would do something new, so to speak. Why would he delay things if his was the capacity to do it right from the start? Instead of arguing for God's free will in this regard, Eunomius would much better accept

24 *CE* III 7,15: τότε γάρ, φησί, καλὸν καὶ πρέπον γεννῆσαι τὸν υἱόν, ὅτε ἐβούλετο, μηδεμιᾶς ἐκ τούτου ζητήσεως ἐγγινομένης τοῖς σώφροσιν τοῦ διὰ τί μὴ πρότερον (GNO II 220,5–8).

that the Son had always been with the Father than saying that he was added to him later on.[25]

The second point he brings up focuses on the temporal aspect: one shouldn't inquire why the Son's generation didn't happen before. In line with what he had been saying all along (and what his elder brother had been arguing earlier against Eunomius),[26] Gregory repeats that in God there is no before or after. The Lord existed with God already before all time. Hence it doesn't make sense to raise even the question. Gregory ends this section with a last bite: "perhaps this is enough to refute those who need no adversary, but are overthrown by their own inadequacy"[27] (24a).

5 Eunomius' Argument that Generation Ends as Well as Begins (24b–38a)

Next Gregory moves a bit further in his opponent's work. After the previous passages, Eunomius had inserted, "after the manner of his instructor Pronicus, some octads of abuse and insult".[28] Apparently Gregory was not the only one who knew how to use the language of polemics!

The reference κατὰ τὸν παιδευτὴν αὐτοῦ Προύνικον[29] is problematic. In *CE* I 50 a similar formulation occurs: τῆς Προυνίκου σοφίας γίνεται μαθητής.[30] In some earlier literature an interpretation was sought in the direction of Pronikos being Eunomius' teacher of shorthand. Arguments in favour are that in *CE* I 50 it is said that Eunomius exercised himself in shorthand, that the use of the term παιδευτὴν in *CE* III 7,25 refers to a teacher in the sense of a person, and the fact that we know that Eunomius has been working as Aetius' shorthand writer before he became bishop of Cyzicus.[31] In his 1993 commentary on *CE* I, Jürgen-André Röder took up the idea already launched at the end of the 19th century to see in Pronikos a figure from Gnostic mythology, which would also

25 G. Dal Toso, *La nozione di proairesis in Gregorio di Nissa: Analisis semiotico-linguistica e prospettive antropologiche*, Patrologia 5, Frankfurt am Main 1998.

26 Basil, *Contra Eunomium* II 16–19 (ed. B. Sesboüé – G.-M. de Durand – L. Doutreleau, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome: Apologie* (SC, 305), Paris 1983, 61–75).

27 *CE* III 7,24: τάχα μὲν ἀπόχρη καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς ἀνατροπὴν τῶν οὐ δεομένων τοῦ προσπαλαίοντος, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας αὐτῶν ἀτονίας καταπιπτόντων (GNO II 223,16–18).

28 *CE* III 7,25: κατὰ τὸν παιδευτὴν αὐτοῦ Προύνικον ἀσυναρτήτους τινὰς καὶ ἀναρμόστους ὕβρεών τε καὶ λοιδορημάτων ὀκτάδας (GNO II 223,26–29).

29 H. C. Teitler, "Kurzschrift", in *RAC* 22 (2008), col. 518–545, esp. 538.

30 *CE* I 50 (GNO I 39,16–17).

31 Socrates, *HE* II 35,14.

fit in quite nicely with the term *oktas*. For our passage it would mean, then, that Gregory attaches Eunomius for polemical reasons to Gnostic heretical doctrines. A similar connection is also made in *CE* III 9,54.[32] Both solutions do not satisfy completely. All in all Gregory does not exhibit much detailed knowledge of Gnosticism in his writings and also in III 9 his main aim is on the polemical level, more than on the level of content. This makes, in my opinion, the balance tilting to the solution of Eunomius the shorthand writer.

Whatever the exact interpretation of the Pronikos-issue, it is clear that in his systematic refutation of the *Apologia apologiae*, Gregory has jumped over some heavily polemical passages from his opponent's writing.[33] He continues at the point where Eunomius had moved again to the level of pointed dialectics and his use of syllogisms:

> Since every act of generating (γέννησις) does not go on indefinitely, but finally comes to an end, those also who accept the generation of the Son are absolutely obliged <to envisage> that at some time he ceased being generated, and must not refuse to believe in his beginning; for things which have ceased to be generated have surely also begun. The cessation of being generated proves the beginning both of generating and being generated; and it is not possible for these people to refuse to believe it, both on the grounds of nature itself, and even more, of the divine laws.[34]

This extensive quotation from Eunomius obviously offers quite some food for thought and discussion. Gregory develops his refutation along four lines. Firstly he points out a flaw in Eunomius' syllogism. Eunomius speaks about "*every* act of generation" and jumps from there to the generation of the Son. In so doing he is applying human analogies to divine realities, which is unacceptable. This first point—it is wrong to apply human analogies to the deity—is straightforward and surfaces time and again in Trinitarian theological treatises.

Gregory's second point follows from the first one. The human generative act, from coitus to the giving birth of a baby, follows the laws of nature. It obviously

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32 J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa, Contra Eunomium I, 1–146*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, 203–204.

33 *CE* III 7,24.

34 *CE* III 7,26: πάσης γεννήσεως οὐκ ἐπ' ἄπειρον ἐκτεινομένης, ἀλλ' εἴς τι τέλος καταληγούσης, ἀνάγκη πᾶσα καὶ τοὺς παραδεξαμένους τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν γέννησιν **** ποτὲ πεπαῦσθαι τοῦτον γεννώμενον μηδὲ πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀπίστως ἔχειν, τῶν παυσαμένων τοῦ γεννᾶσθαι καὶ ἀρξαμένων πάντως· ἡ γὰρ τοῦ γεννᾶσθαι παῦλα πιστοῦται τῆς τε γεννήσεως καὶ τοῦ γεννᾶσθαι τὴν ἀρχήν, καὶ τούτοις ἀπιστεῖν οὐκ ἔστιν ἔκ τε τῆς φύσεως αὐτῆς, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τῶν θείων νόμων (GNO II 224,4–14). See the note which Hall adds to his translation with regard to the lacuna.

has a beginning and an end and therefore involves an extension of time. It is a long process in which passion (*pathos*) is involved. God, however, is essentially *apathès*, passion-less.[35] With the application of the term *apatheia* to God, the early Christians did not imply a sort of divine non-commitment to the created world but sought to affirm Gods radical otherness.[36] God is not as man. This is also reflected in what Gregory writes on the topic of the Son's passionless generation, which resurfaces quite often in his work.[37] It has already been discussed at length in *CE* III 2. Here, in *CE* III 7 Gregory is drawing on this earlier discussion, without adding much new elements. A complete discussion of the topic in Gregory's oeuvre is beyond the scope of this paper. I will limit myself to presenting two relevant passages from outside the *CE*.

In *On Virginity*, his earliest writing, Gregory considers virginity one of the paradoxical perfections of the increated divine nature.

> Indeed, it is a paradox to find virginity in a Father who has a Son whom He has begotten without passion. Moreover, virginity is comprehended together with the only-begotten God who is the giver of incorruptibility, since it shone forth with the purity and absence of passion in His begetting.[38]

With regard to the Father and the Son, paradoxes abound: virginity is found in the Father who is at the same time Father of the Son as a result of a passion-

35 In *CE* I,645 (GNO I 212,1) *apatheia* is mentioned as one of the essential characteristics of God which are universally accepted in the Church and which, therefore, also Eunomius would better accept instead of insisting on the *agennèsia* ("unbegottenness") as God's essential characteristic.

36 P. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, Oxford 2004; F. Young, "*Apathos epathen*: Patristic Reflection on the Problem of Suffering, the Cross and the Incarnation: Response to a Public Crisis in the 4th Century", in: T. Merrigan – F. Glorieux (eds.), *"Godhead Here in Hiding". Incarnation and the History of Human Suffering. Papers of the Fifth Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology*, Leuven 2012, 101–118.

37 In what follows, I draw heavily on J. Leemans, "Divine Apatheia in the Early Church: Gregory of Nyssa on the Passionless Generation of the Son", in: T. Merrigan – F. Glorieux (eds.), *"Godhead Here in Hiding". Incarnation and the History of Human Suffering. Papers of the Fifth Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology*, Leuven 2012, 119–131.

38 *De virginitate* 2,1: ὃ δὴ καὶ παράδοξον ἐν πατρὶ παρθενίαν εὑρίσκεσθαι τῷ καὶ υἱὸν ἔχοντι καὶ δίχα πάθους γεννήσαντι. Τῷ δὲ μονογενεῖ θεῷ τῷ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας χορηγῷ συγκαταλαμβάνεται, ὁμοῦ τῷ καθαρῷ καὶ ἀπαθεῖ τῆς γεννήσεως αὐτοῦ συνεκλάμψασα (ed. M. Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité* (SC, 119), Paris 1966, 263–266); ET taken from V. Woods Callahan, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works*, Washington, DC 1967, 10 (modified).

less generation. Moreover, this virginity is also said to be a characteristic of the Holy Spirit in whose purity and immortality it is included.[39] Virginity and passionless generation go well together and with the divine *apatheia* in common both belong to the essence of the divine nature and to the whole supramundane, transcendent order, the heavenly angelic powers included.[40] Virginity was embodied in Mary and Christ's virgin birth[41] and ultimately constitutes the ideal in which men can participate if they try to live a life that corresponds to it.[42] One can imagine virginity here as a sort of chain which connects the heart of the Trinity with the heart of human life, being for the Christian both a source of inspiration and a guide for the spiritual life.[43]

This passage makes clear how for Gregory his reflections and discussions about the Son's passionless generation as developed in *CE* III are much more than an intellectual exercise in theology directed against Eunomius. Already in his earliest writings the ideals of virginity and *apatheia* belong to the foundation on which his theological project rests: a theological-spiritual reflection on human life, seen as a perpetual strife towards an ever-growing but never fully attained familiarity with and likeness to God.[44]

The issue of the Son's passionless generation also surfaces in texts where one wouldn't expect it so readily. In his sermon *In Theodorum*, Gregory narrates how, during his trial before a court, Theodore rejects the pagan gods, confesses his belief in the Only-begotten Son of God, and declares his willingness to die because of this confession. One of the soldiers in his unit ridicules the martyr's confession but gets back a witty answer:

> 'Theodore, has your God a Son? Does he beget, just like man, with passion?' 'With passion', he [sc. Theodore] said, 'my God did not beget but

39 *De virginitate* 2,1 (ed. Aubineau, 264–265).

40 *Ibid.* and *De virginitate* 2,3 (ed. Aubineau, 268–271).

41 *De virginitate* 2,2 (ed. Aubineau, 266–269).

42 *De virginitate* 2,3 (ed. Aubineau, 268–273).

43 W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, Wiesbaden 1955, 257.

44 Since W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, Wiesbaden 1955, this aspect of Gregory's theology and spirituality is extensively discussed in the important monographs of H. Merki, *Ὁμοίωσις θεῷ: von der platonischen Angleichung an Gott zur Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Paradosis 7, Freiburg 1952; D. L. Balas, *Μετουσία θεοῦ, Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to saint Gregory of Nyssa*, StAns 55, Roma 1966; E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen Metaphysik*, FKDG 16, Göttingen 1966; V. Harrison, *Grace and Human Freedom According to St Gregory of Nyssa*, Lewiston, NY 1992; W. J. Smith, *Passion and Paradise: A Study of Theological Anthropology in Gregory of Nyssa*, New York, NY 2004.

> I do confess the Son and I call his begetting fitting for God. You, however, o pitiable man with the intellect of a child, don't you blush or hide due to your confession in a female god and your veneration for her, a mother of twelve children, a kind of very fertile goddess who just like a hare or a sow effortlessly conceives and gives birth!'[45]

Theodore's pagan interlocutor is pretty straightforward: when Christians confess that God has a Son, how did his generation occur? Gregory's Theodore hastens to point out that the begetting of the Son occurred not with passion, but in a manner which is fitting for God (*theoprepeis*). This passage indicates that Gregory's main concern in affirming the Son's passionless generation was to ensure that divine transcendence be respected and the limits of human analogous language to speak about the divine be observed.

From this follows Gregory's third consideration: Eunomius is wrong in ascribing to the Son's generation a beginning and an end. Where there is no time, there is no beginning and no end. The laws of nature, to which Eunomius had referred, do not apply here.

All in all, Gregory's argumentation is not particularly original, as he is following the lead of his elder brother's *Contra Eunomium* in which he reacts against Eunomius' *Apologia*. In this *Apologia*, Eunomius himself had said that the designations "Father" and "Son" do not by necessity mean that this begetting was a human and bodily one, involving passion. Eunomius defends that the Father's act of begetting was a passionless one and underlines that this does not provide an indication of the Son's essence. The act of begetting is not necessarily to be understood as a communication of essence as is the case between human beings but can also be understood in a relational, proportionate sense. In this vein, it is to Eunomius easily conceivable how the Father can be Unbegotten and the Son a created being, a thing made (*poièma*).[46] In his reaction to Eunomius, Basil agrees that analogous language should not be used to speak about God: the fact that human begetting occurs with passion does

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45 *In Theodorum*: Ἔστι γάρ, ἔφη, Υἱός, ὦ Θεόδωρε, τῷ σῷ Θεῷ; καὶ γεννᾷ ἐκεῖνος, ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐμπαθῶς; Ἐμπαθῶς μὲν ὁ ἐμός, ἔφη, Θεὸς οὐκ ἐγέννησεν· ἀλλὰ καὶ Υἱὸν ὁμολογῶ, καὶ θεοπρεπῆ λέγω τὴν γέννησιν· σὺ, ὦ νηπιώδη τὸν λογισμὸν καὶ ἄθλιε, οὐκ ἐρυθριᾷς οὐδὲ ἐγκαλύπτῃ καὶ θήλειαν ὁμολογῶν θεὰν, καὶ ὡς μητέρα δώδεκα παίδων τὴν αὐτὴν προσκυνῶν, πολύτοκόν τινα δαίμονα κατὰ τοὺς λαγωοὺς ἢ τὰς ὕας εὐκόλως καὶ ἐγκυϊσκομένην καὶ ἀποτίκτουσαν (GNO X,1/2 66,18–67,3); ET taken from J. Leemans – W. Mayer – P. Allen – B. Dehandschutter, *'Let Us Die That We May Live': Greek Homilies on Christian Martyrs*, London—New York 2003, 87.

46 Eunomius, *Apologia* 16–17 (ed. R. P. Vaggione, 52–55).

not imply that this must also be the case with the Son's generation. This generation occurred in a manner fitting to God; "it was passionless, didn't bring about division or separation and was beyond time".[47] At first sight Basil and Eunomius seem to agree about the inappropriateness to use human analogous language to speak about the divine. Yet, they do so on the basis of opposite presumptions. This becomes clearer a bit later in the same writing, when Basil develops this line of thought more extensively. He stresses that Jesus called God "Father" and did teach us, humans, to do the same. This filial adoption does not mean, Basil adds, that God is Father to us in the same way than he is to the Only-begotten. Against Eunomius, Basil stresses that the Son's generation was eternal and that this divine fatherhood is utterly different from the way he is Father to us, humans. From this 'double fatherhood' follows that it is not excluded that the Son is, in essence, more than a *poièma*, as Eunomius holds. This, then, opens the way to argue for the Son's close relationship to the Father, also on the level of essence.[48]

All in all, so far Gregory's discussion of the Son's passionless generation remains quite close to Basil's exchange with Eunomius. Yet, in his *Apologia apologiae*, to which Gregory reacts, the Cyzicene bishop seems to have added a new element to the discussion. According to the quotation from his work given above (extant in Gregory's *CE* III 7,26), Eunomius mentioned besides the "laws of nature" also "the divine laws" as irrefutable evidence for his position that all generation, including that of the Son, has a beginning and an end. According to Gregory, Eunomius refers here to the first Creation narrative. He quotes his opponent:

> 'God,' he says, 'when he intended the law about his creative action (*dêmiourgia*) to be laid down for the Hebrews, did not, at the end of his creative action prescribe the first day of its generation and belief in its beginning; for it was not the first day of its generation, but the seventh, which he appointed as the memorial of his creative action, the day in which he rested from his works'.[49]

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47 Basil, *Contra Eunomium* II 16 (ed. SC, 305, 60–65): ἀπαθῆ, ἀμέριστον, ἀδιαίρετον, ἄχρονον (quote 64,l. 2).

48 Basil, *Contra Eunomium* II 22–24 (ed. SC, 305, 88–99).

49 *CE* III 7,35: βουληθείς, φησίν, ὁ θεὸς τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τὸν περὶ τῆς δημιουργίας ἐντυπωθῆναι νόμον, [οὐ τὴν πρώτην τῆς γεννήσεως ἡμέραν] τῷ τέλει τῆς δημιουργίας ἐναπέθετο καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τὴν πίστιν· οὐ γὰρ τὴν πρώτην τῆς γεννήσεως ἡμέραν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἑβδόμην, ἐν ᾗ κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων, ἔδωκε *** τὴν ὑπόμνησιν τῆς δημιουργίας (GNO II 227,22–228,4). See the note which Hall adds to his translation with regard to the lacuna.

In order to show that the Son's generation had a beginning and an end (in the sense of a cessation), Eunomius refers to the Sabbath commandment. His argument seems to have been that the Sabbath marks the end of the generative act of creation. If the act of creation knew an end, why not the process of the Son's generation? This seems to have been a new argument within the controversy between the Cyzicene and the Cappadocians. Gregory dismisses the argument as irrelevant to the topic of the discussion and pokes fun at his opponent: besides the Sabbath commandment he could have mentioned all other Jewish feasts and rituals as arguments. He names them all, all the feasts.[50] In this way he is, indirectly, also reconnecting with the polemical association between Eunomius and Judaism he had made earlier on. In my view, Eunomius' argument about the Sabbath as the end of a divine generative act in fact doesn't receive from Gregory a fair hearing or an appropriate reply.

6 Temporal Expressions are Meaningless when Time is Not Yet Created (38b–43)

Next, Gregory mentions that he will not say much about "the subsequent passage"[51] in Eunomius' writing because he can agree with it (38). Unfortunately he is not quoting here but only summarising it in his own words. According to Gregory, Eunomius wrote that "one should not envisage anything intervening between the Son and the Father".[52] A statement Gregory has no difficulty with. Of course Nyssen seizes the opportunity to point to Eunomius' inconsistency: on the one hand this statement seems to mean he agrees with the immediacy in the relation between Father-Son, on the other hand he rejects

50 *CE* III 7,37–38: πόσαι καὶ ἄλλαι πρὸς τοῦτο μαρτυρίαι τῷ λογογράφῳ παρείθησαν οὐδὲν τῆς εἰρημένης πρὸς σύστασιν τοῦ ζητουμένου λειπόμεναι; ἡ κατὰ τὴν ὀγδόην περιτομή, ἡ τῶν ἀζύμων ἑβδομάς, τὸ ἐν τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ σεληναίου δρόμου μυστήριον, αἱ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ θυσίαι, ἡ περὶ τῶν λεπρῶν παρατήρησις, ὁ κριός, ὁ μόσχος, ἡ δάμαλις, ὁ ἀποπομπαῖος χίμαρος. εἰ δὲ ταῦτα πόρρω τῶν προκειμένων ἐστίν, πῶς ἐντὸς ἐκεῖνο τοῦ ζητουμένου, λεγέτωσαν οἱ ζηλωταὶ τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν μυστηρίων (GNO II 228,18–27). ET: "How many more testimonies to this have been overlooked by our wordsmith, no less supportive of his case than the one stated?—circumcision on the eighth day, the week of unleavened bread, the ceremony of the fourteenth day of the lunar cycle, the sacrifices of purification, the ritual for lepers, the ram, the calf, the heifer, the scapegoat. If these later examples are far away from the subject, those so keen on the Jewish ceremonies must explain how the first one relates to the debate."

51 *CE* III 7,38: ἐν τοῖς ἐφεξῆς (GNO II 229,4).

52 *CE* III 7,38: μὴ δεῖν μέσον τι τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐννοεῖν κατασκευάζων διέξεισιν (GNO II 229,4–5).

their close bond in making the Son subordinate. On the one hand one could deduce from this statement Eunomius agrees with the eternity of the Son, on the other hand he argues for his being begotten in a situation he did not yet exist. Gregory is of course capitalising on the opening Eunomius offers him with this text. Yet, prudence is necessary here. It is not a quotation but, at best, a paraphrase. Moreover, there is no context provided. As such the expression "nothing intervening between Father and Son" is quite neutral and may have had in the context of Eunomius' writing a different meaning than the one Gregory is giving to it.

In the remainder of this section (40–43) Gregory continues along the same lines of the opposition he construed. By saying that the Son was begotten *when the Father willed it*, Eunomius is bringing in a temporal element within the Son's generation which is incompatible with its eternal character. It is logically impossible to Gregory to concede to Eunomius that the Son once did not exist. The eternal bond between Father and Son, as is present in *John* 10:38 ("The Father is in me and I am in the Father"; comp. *John* 14:10), does exclude this possibility altogether. The undivided bond between Father and the Son must mean that the Son was not begotten in time but before time.

7 Eunomius' Charge that Gregory Makes the Son 'Unbegotten' (44–53)

From Eunomius' point of view, stressing the unity between Father and Son as Gregory is doing, would be tantamount to saying that the Son is unbegotten, just like the Father. Gregory is not quoting Eunomius here but implies that his opponent had given such a reaction. Something Gregory finds absurd of course: declaring that the Son, the Only-begotten God is unbegotten, is as absurd as to declare that the Father was begotten. Gregory denies ever having written such a thing and challenges Eunomius to come up with the passage (45–46).

Then he presses on the issue to the heart of the matter. Indeed, he says, I envisage a close bond between Father and Son but this does not mean that the unbegotteness of the Father and the Son as Only-begotten are interchangeable or that every difference between these two is done away with. Gregory concedes that both he and Eunomius are using the title Unbegotten for the Father and Only-begotten for the Son. Gregory formulates his problem with Eunomius' position in one clearly formulated sentence: "We do not of course accept, that because he exists begotten, for that reason he once did not exist"[53] (47). Existence and non-existence, being and non-being, are mutually

53 *CE* III 7,47: οὐ μὴν ἐπειδὴ γεννητῶς αὐτὸν εἶναί φαμεν, τὸ μὴ εἶναι αὐτόν ποτε διὰ τούτου παραδεξόμεθα (GNO II 231,25–27).

exclusive to Gregory. Even if one admits change, at the beginning and the end of something that exists, always is being; and at the beginning and the end of what not-exists, there is non-being. Gregory gives the following example: if one were to think of that which is not in contrast to that which is, he may name differently that which is before its constitution and that which follows the dissolution of what is constituted, but will reckon the meaning of both to be the same. What does that mean for the Only-begotten? In Scripture it is said that he is Life, Light, Truth, and so many more things. So it is absurd to combine with regard to the Only-begotten existence and non-existence. Logically this would mean that he who is Light, Life, Truth, would before and after also be the opposite: darkness, death, falsehood. Introducing time and distance within the deity and the oppositions to which it gives rise, leads to absurdities. *John* 14:10 is adduced as support of this: "I am in the Father and the Father in me". This verse makes admirably clear that "what is not, might not be thought of as in that which is, nor that which is, is in what is not"[54] (52). The Son derives his existence from the Father and, reversely, nothing of the Father is to be understood outside the Son. In sum: there can be no distance, temporal or whatever, between Father and Son because of his begottenness.[55]

8 The Error of Supposing that All that the Son is Once Did Not Exist (54–64)

In the last section of *CE* III 7 Gregory continues his reflection against Eunomius' idea that from the begottenness of the Son it follows that there had been a moment that he didn't exist. Oppositions do exclude one another by definition and cannot co-exist together. Where there is good there cannot be evil, where there is light there cannot be darkness, and vice versa. This simple truth is the fatal blow to the heresy's saying: "It was then that the Father made Him, when he willed".[56] Because from this follows that before He made him, the Son, who is the Light and the truth and so many more good things, all these things apparently did not exist. Since we know that the Designer in his *philanthropia* made everything the world needed, this means that the world needed Light and truth and true spiritual Life. All of this did not exist because he surely must have

54 *CE* III 7,52: ὡς οὔτε τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἐν τῷ ὄντι νοουμένου οὔτε τοῦ ὄντος ἐν τῷ μὴ ὄντι (GNO II 233,22–23).

55 On the absence of an interval between Father and Son, see also Basil, *Contra Eunomium* II 13 (ed. SC 305, 46–51).

56 *CE* III 7,56: τότε ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν ὁ πατὴρ ὅτε ἠθέλησε (GNO II 234,27).

made what did not yet exist. If he has made the Lord, who is Life, Truth, Light, it means that before Him there was only Death, falsehood, and darkness. "This then is what the wisdom of the heresy safeguards for the Father by dishonouring the Son's eternity: it attributes to God the list of evils before the appointment of the Son".[57] The absurd conclusion that follows from Eunomius' idea that the Son was begotten later than the Father must be the following: "When the Only-begotten God is said by them to have been begotten later than the Father, their 'unbegotten' inevitably appears (...) presenting at the same time the thought of evil"[58] (55).

This invites, dixit Gregory (!), from Eunomius the following reply: "But, the Father too is total Virtue and Life and unapproachable Light, and every sublime thought and word; so it is not necessary to postulate, when the Only-begotten Light did not yet exist, the corresponding darkness in opposition"[59] (61). This saying is introduced by a simple *phèsi*, just like many other quotations from Eunomius. Jaeger prints it in spread text, like all other quotations. Yet, I am inclined to agree with Stuart Hall that we have rather to do with a fictive interlocutor who comes up with the self-evident counterargument. For indeed, why would it follow from what Eunomius says that there is by necessity darkness and evil in God before the Only-begotten was made? After all God is Virtue, Light, and Life! Exactly my point, Gregory shoots back to his imagined opponent! Precisely because God is Virtue, Life, and Light, there is no need at all to posit, as Eunomius is doing, an in between, as intervening, as time, space or distance between him and the Only-begotten. It is indeed, much more logical to see continuity then discontinuity between Father and Son. The Father of Truth did not make truth when it did not exist but, on the contrary, being himself the Fount of Truth he radiated the Only-begotten light of Truth.

Gregory concludes book 7 of *CE* III with unbroken self-confidence: "the blasphemy of those who say that the Son first came into being later than God by creation, is comprehensively refuted"[60] (64).

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57 *CE* III 7,59: ταῦτα τοίνυν ἡ σοφία τῆς αἱρέσεως δωροφορεῖ τῷ πατρὶ δι' ὧν ἀτιμάζει τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸ ἀΐδιον, τὸν τῶν κακῶν κατάλογον πρὸ τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀναδείξεως προσάγουσα τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί (GNO II 235,28–236,2).

58 *CE* III 7,55: τοῦ γὰρ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ ὕστερον μετὰ τὸν πατέρα γεγεννῆσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν λεγομένου, εὑρίσκεται κατ' ἀνάγκην τὸ ἀγέννητον αὐτῶν, (...) τῶν κακῶν τὴν ἔννοιαν συνεμφαῖνον (GNO II 234,11–15).

59 *CE* III 7,61: ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ πατήρ, φησί, καὶ παντελής ἐστιν ἀρετὴ καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ἀπρόσιτον φῶς καὶ πάντα τὰ ὑψηλὰ νοήματά τε καὶ ὀνόματα· ὡς μὴ εἶναι ἀνάγκην, ὅτε τὸ μονογενὲς φῶς οὔπω ἦν, τὸ κατάλληλον ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου νοεῖσθαι σκότος (GNO II 236,14–19).

60 *CE* III 7,64: ὡς πανταχόθεν τῶν ὕστερον τῷ θεῷ διὰ κτίσεως τὸν υἱὸν προγεγενῆσθαι λεγόντων τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐλέγχεσθαι (GNO II 237,16–18).

9 General Conclusion

In this book 7 of *Contra Eunomium* III Gregory continues his controversy with Eunomius. The passionless pretemporal generation of the Son, the absence of any interval (a *tertium quid*) between Father and Son, the meaning of "unbegotten" and "eternal" are some of the main elements constituting the read thread of the argumentation that is developed. Much of the main structure is determined by quotations from his opponent's writing to which Gregory is reacting. Many elements were, in some form or another, already present in Basil of Caesarea's *Contra Eunomium* II but Gregory has reworked and rephrased them into something new. To this end, he is drawing on a huge reservoir of polemical terminology and using surprisingly few Scriptural quotations. We have seen that in his *Apologia apologiae* Eunomius had brought into his ongoing controversy with the youngest of the Cappadocian Fathers the new element of the Sabbath commandment as an argument that the Son's generation had a beginning and an end. We have witnessed that Gregory is reacting in a somewhat evading, even clumsy way, to this new argument. All of this bears, in our opinion, witness to the living and dynamic character of theology and theological controversy in the final decades of the fourth century AD.

Life from Life: The Procession of the Son and the Divine Attributes in Book VIII of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*

Giulio Maspero

Introduction

It is commonly affirmed that *CE* I is dedicated to Trinitarian problems, while *CE* II is dedicated to philosophical ones, particularly in relationship to language. For this reason the latter would not have been popular in monastic circles after the 5th-6th centuries, even to the point of omission[1] and consequent confusion, which was resolved by the edition of W. Jaeger.[2] *CE* III would have been dedicated to Christological problems instead. This general division is obviously justified, even if theological analysis of Gregory's arguments leads one to recognize a true and proper theological synthesis in *CE* III, which, from Christological questions, returns through the analysis of the divine names and attributes to Trinitarian doctrine. The result is a new metaphysical understanding of the ultimate foundation of reality that is consistent with Trinitarian revelation.

This commentary on Chapter VIII is organized as follows: After a presentation of its contents, the fundamental concepts will be situated in light of the structure of *Eun* III. From here, we will propose the central thesis of the connection between the attributes, processions, and intra-Trinitarian relations. This connection can be deduced from the insistence with which, throughout the entire work, Gregory connects derivative language of Nicene origin with his reflections on the names of God. The study of the formula *Life from Life*, which appears in the conclusion of Chapter VIII, will help to situate Gregory's doctrine in the context of hermeneutics of the Nicene Creed. We will then conclude by proposing the development of a new ontology as a possible interpretive key for Gregory's work. This ontology, made possible by the revelation of the One and Triune God in Christian salvation, is founded in the dimensions of person and relation.

1 Cf. GNO II XVII–XVIII.

2 Cf. E. Cavalcanti, *Studi eunomiani*, Rome 1976, 67–105.

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Content

The text of Chapter VIII can be divided into an ironic *incipit* that situates the discussion in an apophatic framework; an exposition of five of Eunomius' arguments accompanied by Gregory's responses, which are basically reductions *ad absurdum,* and two final positive sections. One could say that Gregory moves from defence to attack, presenting, from the reality of Christian salvation, an extremely strong ontological conceptualization that ties the divine attributes to the God's Trinitarian dimension.

The text can be divided into the following points (classic numbering in parentheses, with GNO references at the end of each line), which will be explicated below:

1.	Exhortation (1–4): The Ant and the Trinity. Natural Apophatism	238,1–240,4
2.	Eunomius' First Argument (5–12): the Names of *door, way, and light*	240,5–243,11
3.	Second Argument (13–23): Eternal Life and Generation	243,13–24
4.	Third Argument (24–31): Generation is Separated from the Father	247,14–250,21
5.	Fourth Argument (32–42): The Son is not Properly Son	250,21–254,25
6.	Fifth Argument (43–53): The Son is Servant by Nature	254,25–259,2
7.	Gregory's Conclusion (54–58): Generation and Filiation	259,3–261,3
8.	Metaphysical Complement (59–64): Substance and Existence	261,4–263,6

1) *Exhortation*. Apophatism, which for Gregory does not only regard God, but every creature, is the starting point. The incapacity to express the nature itself of an animal as small as the ant immediately shows the fallacy of Eunomius' claim of "having reached the knowledge of what exists" (8,3: 238,19–20). The being of the ant, which had already been used together with the mosquito in GNO II, 94, 23–24 (2,130), is treated from the perspective of the concept of life, immediately implicating reference to generation.

2) *Argument I*. Eunomius says that Christ is defined as *door, way*, and *light*. This would demonstrate that God's substance can be understood, since through Christ one can rise up to the Father. There is thus a reference to a metaphysical

conception that unites, in a continuous manner, the First Principle and the world, through an ontological ladder that can be climbed by thought. But then, Gregory responds, one could cite all the other names, such as *stone*, *rock*, *spring*, and *tree*. "He who is above every name becomes many-named for us, with titles according to his various acts of kindness" (8,10: 242,10–11). He is called light when He chases the shadows, life when He gives immortality, and path when He leads to truth. The radical difference between the gnoseological conceptions of Eunomius and Gregory enters into play here: While for the first, following Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition, there is a necessary connection between names and things,[3] for the Cappadocians, names correspond to actions, while substances are inexpressible in their metaphysical depth.

3) *Argument II*. Of the various divine attributes, Gregory focuses his attention on life, because Eunomius maintains that the Son is something other than *eternal life*. For him, one must proceed beyond generation in order to reach Being and eternal life (8,14: 243,25–29). If this were true, however, faith would be in vain. What almost disgusts Gregory is that Eunomius sought eternal life there where the Only-Begotten God is not (8,15: 244,13–15). This is at the centre of Chapter VIII: If Eunomius is right, Christ lied when He said that He is life, or else He is simply not eternal life. If this were the case, however, He would participate in what is typical of the irrational world, so that one would reach the absurd conclusion that the Logos is irrational (8,17: 244,29). Christian hope would be unfounded, because the Saviour would not have the same nature as the Father. Only the latter would be eternal life. The Gospel however taught us to see eternal life in the Son and the Holy Spirit in the same way as it is in the Father (8,20: 246, 11–17). For whoever finds Christ is saved, because "He himself both is life, and has life in himself." (8,21: 246,20). Eunomius judiazes and falls into the error of Sabellius and Montanus, because he does not see the divinity in the Trinity of hypostases (8,23: 247, 10).

3 "The *physical* order of reality is structured in three descending levels of substance—operation—name: The operation establishes the relationships between the three substances, without requiring recourse to the error of emanationism" (C. Moreschini, *Storia della filosofia patristica*, Brescia 2004, 511). For this reason, Eunomius considers the relationship between thing and name as normative. J. Daniélou has studied his philosophy of language, reaching the conclusion that Eunomius constitutes an intermediary link between Iamblichus and Proclus: J. Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle", *REG* 69 (1956) 412–432. For a more general perspective, see: L. Abramowski, "Eunomios", *RAC* 6, col. 936–947.

4) *Argument III.* Eunomius denies that Christ is eternal life, and thus must separate generation from the Father. Non-generation would correspond to the first Person of the Trinity, while generation would not. The substance of the Father would be identified with being unengendered, and would for this reason be different than that of the Son, which is engendered. Gregory argues by distinguishing being engendered or unengendered from substance, thus undermining Eunomius' argument. For if these two arguments are distinguished, their distinction does not regard substance, which must instead be one for the the Father and the Son (8,25: 247,20–248,10). The response proceeds by analysing how generation could be separated from the Father, if it is considered as a substance, or if it is considered as an operation. If it is an operation, it should be common, if instead it is a substance, one would reach the paradox of the Son having two Fathers: He who is unengendered, and he who truly engenders Him (8,26: 248, 10–21). Gregory's logic tends towards the concept of co-relativity: By showing the inseparability of attributes and procession, he wants to situate the distinction of the two divine Persons on the level of the relation that arises from procession. Eunomius constructs his argument to reaffirm the fundamental Arian dogma that he who has existence by generation did not exist before being engendered. This however, on the basis of Gregory's argument, either means that there are two fathers, or that the Son was generated by himself. This is a demonstration by the absurd which, from Eunomius' affirmations, deduces the existence of a hypostasis, a separated substance, from generation, and thus the Father's extrinsicality in regard to the generation of the Son, and even the latter's auto-generation (8,29: 249, 19–23). This means that Eunomius would be correct if he meant that being father is identical to generating, and thus that He who has his existence from the Father cannot be before the Father (8,30: 250, 10–11). But if Eunomius thinks of generation as a substance that is separated from the Father and conjoined to the Son, one cannot see what he means to say.

5) *Argument IV.* Eunomius maintains that Christ does not exist in the proper sense. Gregory responds that this means that He is not at all, because God cannot not be in the proper sense, and if it were such, faith would be absurd, since one cannot believe in one who does not exist. Eunomius' point is that the Son is not said to be in an absolute sense, but is said to be in the Father's bosom, and in the Principle. For this reason, He would not be simple, but would have a multiform nature. Thus, "He is not, He is not in a simple manner, and He is not in the proper sense" (8,36: 252, 15–16). The response is based in the Johannine prologue. Gregory says with irony that then Eunomius' heart and brain do not exist, because according to Eunomius' argument, everything

that is in something else does not exist in the proper sense. This is true if existence in the proper sense can only be conceded to what exists in an absolute sense and without relation. And always in the Johannine prologue, the Logos is not only said to be with the Father and in the Father's bosom, but is also said to be God in an absolute way and without relation to another (8,40: 254,2–3). Further, if it were true that everything that is in another cannot be in the absolute sense, it would be necessary to deny it of the Father as well, because Scripture does not only say that the Son is in the Father, but also that the Father is in the Son. One can see all the strength of Gregory's metaphysical reasoning, which extrapolates the relational aspect of Trinitarian being. For him, to say that the Son is in the Father's bosom is the same as saying the Father is in the Son, because otherwise the question as to what the Father's bosom would have contained before the generation of the Son leads one to absurdity. If it was full, the Son is the only one that could have been its fullness, and if it was empty, God lacked something, and moved from nonbeing to being (8,41: 254,6–19).

6) *Argument V.* Eunomius affirms that the Son's substance is subjected to the Father's substance, in such a way that Christ is only a servant. Gregory responds to this quoting the Gospel, where it says that there is only one Lord, and that this title is applicable to both the Father and the Son. For Eunomius, the second Person of the Trinity is a servant, even if Lord of the rest of creation, as is the case for the first servant in a rich house. The critical issue for Gregory is the absurdity of thinking that the God of the universe is not Lord by nature, as is required by the simplicity of the divine Being. Thus the Eunomians either do not call Christ God because He does not have a simple substance that is without parts, or, if they admit his simplicity, they must explain how there are opposing realities in Him, such as lordship and slavery. This is an absurdity, like the fact that they present life and death together (8,49: 257,10–19). It is impossible for Christ to be a servant by nature and God by name. Whoever says that He is a servant by nature makes Him a companion in slavery, and must clearly refuse to believe in Him. If not, one would wind up submitting oneself to a servant, falling into sin and idolatry by finishing in adoring oneself. Further, since fear is a passion that belongs essentially to the servile state, they would attribute fear itself to that god who is their companion in slavery (8,53: 258,30–259,2).

7) *Theological Conclusion.* Having reached this point, Gregory presents his position, which is based on the reality of Christian salvation, according to an argument that, from Athanasius' time, was a classical response to the Arians.

Not only is the Son not a servant, but neither are men, because the Lord took the limits of our nature on himself to destroy them in his immaculate nature. Salvation consists in the fullness of the life that Christ communicates to man, a fullness that disperses all fear. Everything that the Father has, all of his goods, are in the Son by the simple fact that this Son possesses the Father himself (8,56: 260, 2–3). For this reason, the Son cannot be servant, but is master, insofar as He is Light from Light, Life from Life, and Truth from Truth. For the same reason, he is Lord from Lord, King from King, God from God, and un-dominated from un-dominated (8,57: 260,13–16). This is the nucleus of Gregory's response, which is thus tied into the Nicene Creed and the orthodox hermeneutic of derivative language. God's essential attributes are viewed in light of the Son's procession from the Father and the relations that it constitutes. The Father is the true Life, eternal Life, but it is precisely because of this that He generates the Son, who is in turn Life from Life, from all eternity. This founds the divine Persons being in one another. In a certain sense, generation is implicated in the attribute of Life itself, as with Light and Truth, because, if it is true Light it must irradiate, like Truth engenders knowledge. This occurs because the Son possesses the Father himself, and thus possesses all that the Father possesses. One thus reaches the final paradox, by which one either admits that the Son is glorified by the Father's reign, or the Father is offended by the Son's dishonour, i.e., the Father too should be thought of as a servant. In this way, Eunomius would dishonour the immaculate glory of the Father.

8) Metaphysical Complement. Gregory laments that Eunomius speaks of dignity and not of Being. In a certain sense he vindicates the metaphysical value of the theology just presented. The arguments are peremptory: Substance and existence cannot be separated. In response to Eunomius, who says that the Son does not have the Father's substance because He is from Him, Gregory eliminates any possibility of considering the Son as an intermediate ontological level between the Father and creation. If Eunomius concedes existence as divine being, he must at the same time admit that the Son is one substance with the Father. Being engendered, i.e., being in relation to the Father, is a sign of inferiority for Eunomius. Gregory instead says that it is precisely this relation that founds the identity of substance of the first two Persons, using an exquisitely ontological reasoning, while however going beyond classical Greek metaphysics.

One could summarize Gregory line of thought by reformulating the division of the chapter as follows, in order to manifest his argumentative strategy. Each phrase is introduced with a term that is central to the passage:

1) *Substance.* Substances are unknowable, so that one cannot even understand the nature of an ant.
2) *Energies.* Names do not indicate things, but actions (ἐνεργείαι). Ontology and gnoseology are distinct, even if they are not separated.
3) *Life.* Among the names, Gregory focuses on that of Life, because Christian salvation is true only if the Son is eternal Life.
4) *Generation.* From the attribute of life, Gregory moves, in a natural manner, to generation, i.e., to the procession that is communication of Life. Generation cannot be a separated substance, a *tertium quid* between the Father and the Son.
5) *Relation.* The Son's Being depends on generation. According to Eunomius, the Son does not possess this being in a proper and absolute sense. Relation enters into play here: If it is not possible to be in the proper and absolute sense while being in relation, then neither does the Father exist in that way, because the Father is in the Son like the Son is in the Father.
6) *Lordship*. Negation of subordination: It would be absurd to think that the Son is not Lord like the Father, but that the second Person of the Trinity is subjugated to the First in a servile manner. Trinitarian order is founded on relation, and not on ontological difference.
7) *Theological Attributes*. Not only is the Son not a servant, but neither are men. The Son is Lord because He possesses the Father himself. Procession must then be reinterpreted: If it was a proof of subordination for Eunomius, for Gregory it is the reverse, because the Father is truly Father in the communication of the fullness of his eternal Life to the Son, who is Life from Life. Attribute, generation, and relation are intrinsically linked. From the attributes understood in a purely philosophical manner, one moves to a properly theological formulation that understands the attributes themselves from a relational perspective.
8) *New Ontology*. This is all metaphysical, because essence and existence cannot be separated. One is before a new ontology.

The Role of Chapter VIII in *CE* III

The analysis of the chapter's contents can be clarified and confirmed by reading it in the context of the larger structure of *Eun* III. This would merit its own special study. B. Pottier has offered a structural proposal that should clarify the content of the work better than the division into ten books, which he

considered artificial.[4] However, without entering into the question, the division into ten books seems to offer a valid structure that can also be read in light of the theological relationship between the divine attributes and generation. For Eunomius, this last term is synonymous with *work* and *creature*. Gregory must demonstrate, from revealed affirmations, that metaphysics needs to be rethought. From a philosophical perspective, Eunomius considers the divine attributes independently from the processions. If God is one, He cannot be triune.

The strength of Gregory's arguments, his true defence, is to show how the divine attribute understood in a properly theological sense includes generation, and is inseparable from it. The argument is, as with Athanasius, soteriological: If Christ saves us, it is because He communicates eternal life to us, but eternal life is identified with the divine nature; thus God alone is Life. God is therefore Life in a deeper and more radical sense than the philosophical one: Being Father who engenders and being the Only-Begotten Son who is eternally generated from the Father is inseparable from being Life in the proper and absolute sense.

From this perspective, chapter eight has a key role, because it explicates the nexus between the attribute of life and generation (whose analysis had already begun in the previous chapter) by showing the inseparability of procession and attribute.

If one adopts this quintessentially theological perspective, one could suggest the following for the structure of *Eun* III:

Part I

Ch. 1: Overview. In ch. 1 the problem is introduced with the Eunomian identification of being engendered, made, and created. The argument is carried to its extreme consequences in order to manifest already the connection between the attributes and the procession of the Son, in this way anticipating what will then be developed in the final chapters.

Chs. 2–4: The Attributes of Christ. Chapters 2 to 4 analyse the Eunomian affirmations from a Christological perspective, and aim to show how Christ, engendered by the Father, is Lord. For this, Gregory in the first place denies that eternal generation is marked by passion, as is the case for creatures (ch. 2). He then analyses the affirmation of Acts 2.36, "God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified", in order to show in what sense Jesus was made Christ and Lord after the passion, through the distinction of the created nature from the uncreated one (ch. 3). Finally, after this distinction, Gregory

4 Cf. B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 40–54.

defends himself from the accusation of having introduced two Christs, and develops the question of the *communicatio idiomatum* in a highly effective manner (ch. 4).

Part II

Chs. 5–6: The Attributes of the Son. At this point we have reached the centre of the treatise. In ch. 5 Gregory takes up the theme of *CE* II again through the title of Lord attributed to Christ, as well as the various names attributed to God in general. This chapter marks the passage to the second part of the work, where the question of generation will be considered *in divinis* directly. This is already evident in ch. 6, where Gregory denies that the Son was engendered from an act of the Father's will that would have Him moving from nonbeing to being. The eternal and indivisible unity of the Father and the Son is founded precisely on the unicity of generation, which is radically different than any type of generation on the level of creatures.

Chs. 7–9: The Attributes in Particular. The last four chapters of *CE* III can be read as explications of the relationship between eternal generation and the divine attributes, because *eternity, life,* and *goodness* are analysed from the soteriological perspective. In ch. 7, Gregory denies that *before* and *after* can be applied to the relationship between the first two Persons of the Trinity. There is no interval between the Father and the Son, is such a way that it is clear that there is no incompatibility between *eternity* and generation.

Ch. 8 applies what was presented in the previous chapter on eternity to the divine attribute of *Life*. True Life must be eternal life. Christ saves because He communicates eternal life. He communicates it because He is eternal Life. The importance of this chapter, as was noted above, comes from the fact that the relationship between the divine attributes and generation is explicated here. It is here that the relationship can be best presented, because Life and generation can be directly connected. Among the three divine attributes of eternity, life, and goodness, the second most naturally refers to generation, and thus to the relation between the Father and the Son.

In ch. 9, the discussion moves on to the attribute of *goodness*, which cannot be considered in the Father alone, but must also be considered in the Son. Christ, who is eternal Life, gave this life for us. Through this, He revealed in the economy that He possesses the divine attribute of goodness in its fullness. The key to the Incarnation is the self-gift that God offers to men. The death of Christ is not a sign of inferiority or subordination, but instead manifests Jesus' divinity, because the eternal Life that is communicated and the absolute Goodness that this communication manifests are the splendour of the divine attributes.

Ch. 10: Synthesis. The last chapter finishes the development by showing that the Only-Begotten possesses all the divine attributes in his divine nature, and possesses all the human attributes in his human nature. From this perspective, an offence to the Son is an offence to the Father, since the two are one—They are the one divine nature. Christological and Trinitarian reflections are presented as inseparable.

At the root of the connection of the divine attributes and the generation of the Son is a new metaphysics that is relational, insofar as the First Principle can no longer be considered according to the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic perspective of a solitary being without relations, but the Father and the Son are in one another, and through one another. True unity is unity in relation just as true life is life in relation.

Attributes and Relation

This reading appears to be confirmed by the frequency with which, throughout the course of the work, attributes and generation are linked in Gregory's arguments. There is an impression that this is in fact the σκοπός of the writing. It is enough to go through the important points of ch. 8 in light of *CE* III.

The link between attributes, procession, and relation can already be seen in the first chapter. The centre of the reasoning, which is then developed throughout the work, is based on the affirmation of Jn 1.18, that the Son is in the Father's bosom:[5]

1. God is fullness, and has in himself, in his bosom, power, wisdom, light, word, life, and truth.
2. The Son, who is in the Father's bosom, always keeps this bosom full.
3. This is because the Father could never be thought of as lacking any good thing, and the Son is these good things, i.e., power, life, truth, light, and wisdom.

Gregory proposes this argument as an interpretive key for the Nicene *true God from true God* (θεὸν ἀληθινὸν τὸν ἐκ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ) which appears explicitly in *CE* III 1,65,12 (GNO II 27,3) and later in *CE* III 1,85,9–10 (GNO II 33,15–16) together with *Light from Light* (φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸς ἀληθινὸς ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ). The point Gregory is arguing against, as is clear from *CE* III 1,67 (GNO II 27,21–28,6), is that, for Eunomius, generation implies a substantial difference, in such

5 Cf. *CE* III 1,48–49 (GNO II 20,8–21.5).

a way that the engendered substance cannot be the same as the unengendered substance. In this perspective, procession is proof of subordination.

Gregory's response shows the relationship of mutual immanence of the Father and the Son, by which the names given to the Son are inconceivable outside of the relation between the two first divine Persons. In fact:

> However Son, Right hand, Only-begotten, Word (Logos), Wisdom, Power, and all such titles as indicate a relationship (πρός τι) are surely all used with simultaneous reference to some relational bond with the Father.[6]

This argumentative structure begins from the attributes that are predicated of the Father, in order to reach the same attributes predicated of the Son through the derivative preposition ἐκ. The reference to the bosom of the Father serves to oblige understanding this derivation in the sense of mutual immanence, and thus in the sense of relation, which becomes an interpretive key for generation.

This constitutes the response to Eunomius' theory of names. He had platonically affirmed that *The intimate bond of names and things is immutable* (ἀμετάθετος ἡ προσφυὴς τῶν ὀνομάτων πρὸς τὰ πράγματα σχέσις).[7] There is a distinct reality that corresponds to each name,[8] because of the necessary connection that ties the world of Ideas to material reality. For this reason, the engendered and unengendered must correspond to different substances. It is from this that the impossibility of reading the Nicene *Light from Light* in the sense of *homoousios* comes from, because derivative language means, in Eunomius' philosophy of language, that the distance between two lights is the same as that between the engendered and unengendered.[9] His ontological conceptualization, which saw a continuous series of descending ontological levels between the First Principle and the world, was immediately translated into a gnoseology that was indistinguishable from ontology.

Gregory instead works within a more properly Aristotelian gnoseology, for which the name is of human, and not divine, origin. For him, names are posterior to things, and are *the shadows of things* (σκιαὶ τῶν πραγμάτων),

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6 υἱὸς δὲ καὶ δεξιὰ καὶ μονογενὴς καὶ λόγος καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πάντα, ὅσα πρός τι λέγεται, καθάπερ ἐν συζυγίᾳ τινὶ σχετικῇ τῷ πατρὶ πάντως συνονομαζόμενος λέγεται. (*CE* III 1,133,9–134,1 [GNO II 48,19–22]). All translations of *CE* III are by Stuart G. Hall.

7 *CE* III 5,32,6–8 (GNO II 171,22–24).

8 Cf. *CE* III 5,18 (GNO II 166,11–25).

9 ὅσον διέστηκε τὸ γεννητὸν πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον, τοσοῦτον παρήλλακται τὸ φῶς πρὸς τὸ φῶς (*CE* III 10,18,4–6 [GNO II 296,7–9]).

which receive form according to the movements of what subsists in hypostasis (τῶν ὑφεστώτων).[10] This appears to be what motivates Gregory to call the debate with Eunomius σκιαμαχία:[11] a struggle with the shadows.

This claimed necessary connection between names and things in theory permitted an ascent in knowledge that proceeded from below to above. It is against this perspective that Gregory intervenes, by accusing his adversary of projection from below to above, and of thus violating the *mystery of theology* (θεολογίας μυστήριον) by applying the names and arguments taken from created nature, and thus the realm of necessity, to God.[12]

For Gregory on the other hand, the knowledge of God can only proceed from above to below, as it is only in gift. It is God's action in history that allows us to know Him, while there can be no *a priori* idea of Him. The common notions and natural knowledge of God are founded in the act of creation, which is the fruit of liberty and love. Thus the only name that can express the divine nature is the marvel that rises towards Him in our soul.[13] God's only true name is wonder.

It is only through his actions that it is possible to know something about Him, and thus, thanks to the narration of his actions for men. Therefore, when we read that He is just and patient, *it is not the being of God that we learn, but one of the things observed about him* (οὐ τὴν θείαν οὐσίαν, ἀλλά τι τῶν περὶ αὐτὴν θεωρουμένων ἐμάθομεν).[14] This is an expression that usually refers to the ἐνεργείαι, i.e., to God's activity.

The distinction between divine immanence and economy has a role here. This is something fundamental in the orthodox response to Arianism, and must always be present in interpretation of Gregory's doctrine. The mystery of theology that Eunomius would have violated regards precisely the knowledge of the divine substance, because it is unknowable and ineffable in itself.

The only source of knowledge of the divine attributes is the economy, i.e., the salvific action of God, insofar as there is no necessary connection between the creature and the Creator. For this reason, Gregory states in ch. 8:

> For my part, taught by divinely inspired scripture, this is what I boldly declare: He who is above every name becomes many-named for us, with

10 σκιαὶ τῶν πραγμάτων εἰσὶν αἱ φωναί, πρὸς τὰς κινήσεις τῶν ὑφεστώτων σχηματιζόμεναι (*CE* II 150,12–13 [GNO I 269,11–14]).

11 *CE* III 5,19,2 (GNO II 166,25) and 7,54.3 (GNO II 234,8).

12 Cf. *CE* III 2,24 (GNO II 59,28–60.9).

13 ἕν ἐστι σημαντικὸν τῆς θείας φύσεως ὄνομα, τὸ ἀρρήτως περὶ αὐτῆς ἡμῖν θαῦμα κατὰ ψυχὴν ἐγγινόμενον (*CE* III 6,4,14–5,1 [GNO II 187,9–11]).

14 *CE* III 5,59,2–4 [GNO II 181,22–24]).

> titles according to his various acts of kindness: Light when he abolishes the darkness of ignorance, Life when he bestows immortality, Way when he guides us from error to truth. So too Strong Tower, Fenced City, Fountain, Rock, Vine, Physician, Resurrection, and all such names are given to him in relation to us, distributing himself variously between his benefits to us.[15]

The names Light and Life appear in this text. They are not names of the essence, but attributes. Attributes here are understood as those qualities that belong only to the divine nature, and that man knows through God's action.

It is important to clarify that these attributes constitute a true knowledge of God, because they are effects that can characterize his nature alone. They are proper effects, and founded in an operation that can be accomplished by the divine nature alone. At the same time, the distinction between Creator and creature is clear. For this reason, Gregory writes to Eunomius:

> Creation was not in the Beginning, nor with God, nor was God; not Life, nor Light, nor Resurrection, nor any of the other God-befitting names.[16]

The radicality of this distinction compels reflection on the relationship between the divine attributes and relation. The Gospel introduces us to the Son as God, Life, Light, Resurrection, etc. In this manner, whoever interrogates the meaning of Scripture finds themselves, through the narrative of the economy, before, not only the Life and Light of God, but also before Him who is Light from Light and Life from Life. This is a reality that imposes itself, because Christ resurrects and saves by communicating eternal Life. This is the source of the lively words in ch. 8:

> The wretch did not observe that the Gospel teaches us to perceive eternal life equally in Father, Son and Holy Spirit: of the Father, the Word says

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15 ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο παρὰ τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς διδαχθεὶς θαρσῶν ἀποφαίνομαι, ὅτι ὁ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα ὢν ἡμῖν πολυώνυμος γίνεται κατὰ τὰς τῶν εὐεργεσιῶν ποικιλίας ὀνομαζόμενος, φῶς μὲν ὅταν ἐξαφανίζῃ τῆς ἀγνοίας τὸν ζόφον, ζωὴ δὲ ὅταν τὴν ἀθανασίαν χαρίζηται, ὁδὸς δὲ ὅταν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης χειραγωγήσῃ· οὕτω καὶ πύργος ἰσχύος καὶ πόλις περιοχῆς καὶ πηγὴ καὶ πέτρα καὶ ἄμπελος καὶ ἰατρὸς καὶ ἀνάστασις καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὀνομάζεται, ποικίλως ἑαυτὸν ταῖς ἡμετέραις εὐεργεσίαις καταμερίζων. (*CE* III 8,10,7–11,1 [GNO II 242,8–18]).

16 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ἡ κτίσις οὔτε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἦν οὔτε θεὸς ἦν, οὐ ζωή, οὐ φῶς, οὐκ ἀνάστασις, οὐ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν θεοπρεπῶν ὀνομάτων (*CE* III 6,64,4–6 [GNO II 208,24–26]).

> this, that to know Him is everlasting life (Jn 17.3); of the Son, that every one who believes in him has eternal life (Jn 3.15); and of the Holy Spirit, that for one who has received his grace He will be a spring welling up for eternal life (Jn 4.14). Every one therefore who desires eternal life, when he finds the Son (the true Son, I mean, and not falsely so called), finds in Him all that he desires, because He both is life, and has life in himself.[17]

The identification of Life and Trinity is dear to Gregory, and is founded in the recognition of Life as one of the characteristics proper to God, who is the source of every good. Thus, the Only-Begotten must be recognized as of the same nature as the Father:

> God is essentially life (αὐτοζωή), and the Only-begotten God is God and Life and Truth and every conceivable thing that is sublime and God-befitting.[18]

All other realities only participate in life, but are not identified with it. For Gregory it thus becomes absurd to deny the Son full divinity.

For Eunomius on the other hand, derivation implies a difference of substance and a descent of ontological level. In this sense, his exegesis is dictated by Aristotelian and Neoplatonic metaphysics, which includes the ontological ladder. If a reality derives from another, if it has relations, it must necessarily be inferior, and cannot be the First Principle. While for Gregory there is an unfillable gap between the Creator and the creature, for Eunomius there are levels of intermediary beings. For this reason, in the last chapter of *Eun* III, Gregory will accuse him of following the Egyptian religion that is characterized by conception of demonic beings that are ontologically halfway between Heaven and earth.[19]

In this way, the distinction between immanence and economy, together with the affirmation of the clear separation between divine nature and cre-

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17 μὴ καταμαθὼν ὁ δείλαιος ὅτι τὴν αἰώνιον ζωὴν ἐπίσης πατρί τε καὶ υἱῷ καὶ πνεύματι ἁγίῳ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐνορᾶν δογματίζει, περὶ μὲν τοῦ πατρὸς οὕτως εἰπόντος τοῦ λόγου ὅτι τὸ γινώσκειν αὐτὸν ἡ αἰώνιός ἐστι ζωή, περὶ δὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ ὅτι πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν τὴν αἰώνιον ἔχει ζωήν, περὶ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ὅτι τῷ δεξαμένῳ τὴν χάριν ἔσται πηγὴ ὕδατος ἁλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. οὐκοῦν πᾶς ὁ ποθῶν τὴν αἰώνιον ζωήν, ἐπειδὰν εὕρῃ τὸν υἱόν, τὸν ἀληθῆ λέγω καὶ οὐ ψευδώνυμον, ὅλον εὗρεν ἐν αὐτῷ ὅπερ ἐπόθησε, διότι καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ζωὴν ἔχει. (*CE* III 8,20,11–21,4 [GNO II 246,10–20]).

18 ἡ μὲν θεότης αὐτοζωή ἐστι, θεὸς δὲ ὁ μονογενὴς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ἀλήθεια καὶ πᾶν εἴ τι ὑψηλὸν καὶ θεοπρεπές ἐστι νόημα, (*CE* III 6,75,1–3 [GNO II 212,15–18]).

19 Cf. *CE* III 10,41 [GNO II 305,11–27]).

ated natures, pushes Gregory towards the formulation of the connection between the attributes and relation. He writes to Eunomius, who maintains that the Father's Right Hand is created insofar as a different substance than the First Principle:

> One who has an eye to look to the truth, will see what he perceives the Most High to be as the same as what he will also see the Right Hand of the Most High to be, uncreated hand of the uncreated, good of the good, eternal of the eternal—the fact that it is begotten in the Father in no way compromising his eternity.[20]

One can see the role of relation here, which is expressed through the repeated use of attributes in the genitive form: ἄκτιστον ἀκτίστου, ἀγαθοῦ ἀγαθήν, ἀϊδίου ἀΐδιον. The very name of the Right Hand of the Father is a relative name, like the name of Son, which is a term that speaks of the Father because it indicates relation with Him (ἡ σχετικὴ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ σημασία).[21]

Relation itself becomes fundamental for conceptualizing the relationship between economy and immanence, because there are names which are known through the economy that do not indicate only the divine nature, but refer specifically to the divine Hypostases, and identify them through mutual relations. Thus the name of Son refers to the Father.

It is critical to note that these names, which are accessible only through revelation and the history of salvation, do not remain on the level of God's action alone, but speak of immanence itself, without thereby offering a definition of the divine substance. In this manner immanence and economy, although distinct, are not separated, because the relational dimension permits access to the interpersonal dynamics of the one and triune God.

The fact that the names of Father and Son speak of immanence is evident by the identification of the relational dimension with that of being in one another:

> even if these two words are not used, the one omitted is also implied by the use of the other. Thus the one inheres and fits in the other (τῷ ἑτέρῳ

20 ὁ γὰρ ὀφθαλμὸν ἔχων πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν βλέποντα οἷον τὸν ὕψιστον ὁρᾷ, τοιαύτην καὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ ὑψίστου κατόψεται, ἄκτιστον ἀκτίστου, ἀγαθοῦ ἀγαθήν, ἀϊδίου ἀΐδιον, μηδὲν τὴν ἀϊδιότητα τοῦ γεννητῶς εἶναι αὐτὴν ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καταβλάπτοντος· (*CE* III 4,26,4–8 [GNO II 144,5–9]).

21 *CE* III 2,143,6–7 (GNO II 99,9–10).

> τὸ ἕτερον), and both are seen in the one, so that neither of these can be thought of by itself without the other.[22]

Gregory transfers the aspect of one Person being in the other, with a significant stylistic skill, to the level of the respective attributes being in one another. If the Son is in the Father who is eternity, He cannot not be eternal:

> being in the Father, He is not in Him in one respect only, but whatever the Father is reckoned to be, in every respect He is that in Him. So, being in the Father's imperishability, he is imperishable, being in his strength, strong, and being in each one of the merits attributed to the Father, He is that—so too in his eternity, He is also eternal.[23]

This is true in two directions, since the immanence of the two divine Persons expressed by *I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me* (*Jn* 14.10)[24] is reciprocal—in such a way that the attribute is true precisely because it is relational:

> One goodness, wisdom, justice, care, power, imperishability, and all things that are of sublime import are equally applied to both, and in a way each has its strength in the other (ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ τὸ ἕτερον): The Father does all things through the Son, and the Only-begotten, being the Power of the Father, performs everything.[25]

We our before a change in metaphysical perspective, because what, in an Aristotelian view, is understood as an accident and a sign of ontological inferiority, i.e., relation, becomes here a sign of the reality and absoluteness of the attribute. In terms of unity, one could say that, for Gregory, God is one precisely because He is triune, like He is life because He engenders.

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22 κἂν μὴ τὰ δύο ῥηθῇ ταῦτα ὀνόματα, τῷ ἑνὶ καὶ τὸ παρεθὲν συσσημαίνεται· οὕτως ἔγκειται καὶ ἐνήρμοσται τῷ ἑτέρῳ τὸ ἕτερον καὶ ἐν τῷ ἑνὶ καθορᾶται ἀμφότερα, ὡς μὴ ἂν ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ νοηθῆναι τούτων τι χωρὶς τοῦ ἄλλου (*CE* III 2,143,7–144,1 [GNO II 99,10–15]).

23 ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ὢν οὐ καθ᾽ ἓν μόνον ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πάντα ὅσα νοεῖται ὁ πατήρ, διὰ πάντων ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῷ. ὡς οὖν ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ τοῦ πατρὸς ὢν ἄφθαρτός ἐστι καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐν τῷ δυνατῷ δυνατὸς καὶ ἐν ἑκάστῳ ὢν τῶν πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἐν τῷ πατρὶ νοουμένων ἐκεῖνό ἐστιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀϊδίῳ πάντως ἀΐδιος (*CE* III 6,10.7–12 [GNO II 189,17–22]).

24 Cf. *CE* III 7,53.1–54.1 (GNO II 233,25–234,6).

25 ἀγαθότης μία, σοφία δικαιοσύνη φρόνησις δύναμις ἀφθαρσία τὰ ἄλλα πάντα, ὅσα τῆς ὑψηλῆς ἐστι σημασίας, ἐφ᾽ ἑκατέρου ὡσαύτως λέγεται καὶ τρόπον τινὰ ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ τὸ ἕτερον τὴν ἰσχὺν ἔχει· ὅ τε γὰρ πατὴρ διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τὰ πάντα (*CE* III 5,47,3–8 [GNO II 177,18–21]).

What has occurred is the introduction of another level of metaphysical analysis, one that became accessible only because of Trinitarian revelation: This is a properly personal and relational level. Thus, for Gregory, the divine essence remains unknowable, but man can nevertheless know something of divine immanence. The apophatic wall hinders following a path of possession of the divine substance, but opens the way to personal knowledge, relational knowledge, which touches the depths of being, without which the Mystery of God looses its radical inexplicability. This level is designated through πως εἶναι:

> To exist unengendered is one of the attributes of Him who is, but the definition of being is one thing, the definition of the manner of being (πως εἶναι), another[26]

Unengendered is a name that regards the essence, but to say that the Son is engendered does not touch the identity of his nature with the Father, but expresses his manner of existing as God. In this sense, πως εἶναι is identified with πρός τι, i.e., with relation (σχέσις).

The argument is the nucleus of Chapter VIII, which attempts to show how being in an absolute and proper manner does not exclude being in relation, because, if this were the case, the Father would not be in an absolute manner either. The argument unfolds as follows:

1. Gregory begins by accepting the possibility that only being without relation (ἄσχετον) is absolute.[27]
2. John not only says that the Son is the Logos of the Father and in the Father, but also that He is God, without adding anything else. This is how he says that the Son is Light and Life (cf. Jn 1.1–4).
3. But if it were true that being in relation excludes absolute being, then the Father would not be absolute either, because Jn 14.10 says that He is in the Son.

The text is quite clear, and constitutes a point of arrival in Gregory's response, which carries Eunomius' arguments to the absurd. For John the Evangelist says:

> that the Word was God, and was Light, and was Life (cf Jn 1.1–4), not [p. 254] merely being in the beginning and with God and in the bosom

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26 τὸ γὰρ ἀγεννήτως εἶναι ἓν τῶν ἐπιθεωρουμένων ἐστὶ τῷ ὄντι, ἄλλος δὲ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἄλλος τοῦ πως εἶναι ὁ λόγος· (*CE* III 5,60,8–10 [GNO II 182,11–13]).

27 Cf. *CE* III 8,39,6 -40,1 (GNO II 253,12–15).

> of the Father, in such a way that by this kind of qualification the Lord is deprived of being in the strict sense. By saying that he was God, he cuts off every way round for those whose minds are running into wickedness, and furthermore, even more important, he proves the evil intent of our opponents. For if they claim that being in something is a sign of not strictly being, they surely agree that the Father also strictly is not, since they learn from the Gospel that as the Son is in the Father, so too the Father is in the Son, according to what the Lord says (Jn 14.10). To say that the Father is in the Son, is the same as saying that the Son is in the bosom of the Father.[28]

The name of Father also designates the concrete mode of existing as God for the first Person of the Trinity. It is a name that expresses relation to the Son. The two divine Persons are correlative: Their nature is Being itself, it is absolute, while at the same time each of them exists in relation to the other. Πως εἶναι comes from πρός τι in such a way that, if one absurdly said that the Son did not exist, the non-existence of the Father would necessarily follow (ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀνυπαρξία).[29]

Life from Life: Generation

In light of what has been said, one can understand the importance of the formula of *Life from Life*, which follows the pattern used in the Nicene Creed. In it, the attribute is predicated twice, to the two extremes of a relation: The source and the derived term. In the Arian optic, this implied subordination. In the understanding of Being through faith, Gregory reaches another conclusion, because the existence of the divine Hypostases is relational.

Thus, in the conclusion of ch. 8, Gregory responds to Eunomius' subordinationist affirmation by saying that he, faithful to the Platonic figure of the

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28 θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ζωὴ ἦν καὶ φῶς ἦν, οὐ μόνον ἐν ἀρχῇ καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἐν κόλποις τοῦ πατρὸς ὤν, ὥστε διὰ τῆς τοιαύτης σχέσεως ἀναιρεῖσθαι τοῦ κυρίου τὸ κυρίως εἶναι· ἀλλὰ τῷ εἰπεῖν ὅτι θεὸς ἦν, τῇ ἀσχέτῳ ταύτῃ καὶ ἀπολύτῳ φωνῇ πᾶσαν περιδρομὴν τῶν εἰς ἀσέβειαν τρεχόντων τοῖς λογισμοῖς ὑποτέμνεται καὶ ἔτι πρὸς τούτοις, ὃ καὶ μᾶλλον, ἐλέγχει τὴν τῶν ἀντικειμένων κακόνοιαν. εἰ γὰρ τὸ ἔν τινι εἶναι σημεῖον ποιοῦνται τοῦ μὴ κυρίως εἶναι, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα κυρίως εἶναι πάντως συντίθενται, μεμαθηκότες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ὅτι ὥσπερ ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ πατρί, οὕτω καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ μένει κατὰ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου φωνήν. ἴσον γάρ ἐστι τῷ ἐν κόλποις εἶναι τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν υἱὸν τὸ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ τὸν πατέρα εἶναι λέγειν. (*CE* III 8,40,11–41,6 [GNO II 253,25–254,11]).

29 Cf. *CE* III 6,50,7–51,1 (GNO II 203,21–23).

demiurge, reduced the Son to a slave, even if He would be the first among slaves as the lord of created realities:

> Or how is the King's Son born for slavery? These things are impossible, quite impossible. Rather, as he is Light from Light, Life from Life, and Truth from Truth (φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς καὶ ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ ἐξ ἀληθείας ἀλήθεια), so is He also Lord from Lord, King from King, God from God, and Sovereign from Sovereign (ἐκ κυρίου κύριος, βασιλεὺς ἐκ βασιλέως, ἐκ θεοῦ θεός, ἐξ ἀδεσπότου ἀδέσποτος). Since he has the whole of the Father in him, he surely has in him whatever the Father has; and because all that the Son has belongs to the Father, then of necessity, if indeed the Son is a slave, the Father also is reduced to slavery by the enemies of the glory of God, for there is certainly nothing attributed to the Son, which is not the Father's. 'All things,' He says, 'that are mine are yours, and yours mine' (Jn 17.10).[30]

The text gathers various derivative formulas, including φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς and ἐκ θεοῦ θεός, which are Nicene terms distributed within a first group in which *Light from Light* is accompanied by *Life from Life* and *Truth from Truth*. The second group's fundamental significance is a direct negation of the Son's slavery. Thus *God from God* is accompanied by *Lord from Lord, King from King*, and *Sovereign from Sovereign*.

Among these formulas, the one that is richest in history and most fruitful is *Life from Life*. This expression could be acceptable to the Arian tradition, since it could permit different ontological levels for the two divine Persons. The goal of Gregory and the orthodox was to show that, due to the perfection of procession, the attribute is predicated of the Son in an absolute manner as well.

In this context, the expression *Life from Life* is particularly important, because generation is immediately linked to the communication of life. The names of the divine Persons, the term for procession, and the term for the divine attribute are all connected, because the Son proceeds from the Father insofar as engendered from Him as eternally receiving Life in the absolute and proper sense.

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30 πῶς δὲ ὁ τοῦ βασιλέως υἱὸς εἰς δουλείαν γεννᾶται; οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα, οὐκ ἔστιν. ἀλλ᾽ ὡς φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς καὶ ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ ἐξ ἀληθείας ἀλήθεια, οὕτως καὶ ἐκ κυρίου κύριος, βασιλεὺς ἐκ βασιλέως, ἐκ θεοῦ θεός, ἐξ ἀδεσπότου ἀδέσποτος· ὅλον γὰρ ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν πατέρα, εἴ τι ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ, πάντως ἔχει· καὶ ἐπειδὴ πάντα τοῦ πατρός ἐστιν ὅσα ὁ υἱὸς ἔχει, ἀνάγκη πᾶσα παρὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δόξης, εἴπερ ὁ υἱὸς δοῦλος, καὶ τὸν πατέρα εἰς δουλείαν κατάγεσθαι. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστι τῶν ἐν τῷ υἱῷ θεωρουμένων, ὃ μὴ τοῦ πατρός ἐστι πάντως. Πάντα γάρ, φησί, τὰ ἐμὰ σὰ καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμά. (*CE* III 8,57,1–58,3 [GNO II 260,12–22]).

It is worth noting here that the expression ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς appears in Plotinus.

> The first part of the soul is above, towards the peak, eternally satisfied and illuminated—and it remains there above. The other part, which participates in the first, proceeds (πρόεισι) eternally insofar as it participates, as life from life (ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς). It is in fact the activity (ἐνέργεια) that spreads in every place and is present everywhere.[31]

It can be clearly seen from the text that procession, expressed in the derivative formula of *life from life*, signifies participation and thus inferiority. This philosophical precedent could be at the root of the interpretive ambiguity of the formula in the theological domain.

There are studies that tie Eunomius' doctrine directly to Plotinus.[32] Eunomius is however contrary to emanationism.[33] On the other hand, the presence of Plotinian language in both Eunomius and Gregory is patent. The substantial difference between the two authors can perhaps be individuated in the use that they make of Neoplatonic philosophy: Eunomius develops his thought by seeking an exact doctrinal formulation that permits knowledge of God's essence, while Gregory recognizes the limits of human reason, and accepts that it is only Christ who saves us—not human reason. For this reason, he allows faith to open the mind to a new metaphysics. In the end, both authors use the same expressions, but with different meanings.

This is confirmed by the fact that the formula *Life from Life* appears in Alexandrian tradition. Referring to Baptism and pneumatical men, one finds in one of Origen's fragments:

> As one is born of the Saviour, wise from Wisdom, true from Truth, and Life from Life, which alone is the principle of all things and the only generation, so too is the pneumatical man born holy from the Holy Spirit.[34]

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31 [Τὸ λογιστικὸν] οὖν αὐτῆς ἄνω πρὸς τὸ ἄνω ἀεὶ πληρού μενον καὶ ἐλλαμπόμενον μένει ἐκεῖ, τὸ δὲ τῇ τοῦ μετα λαβόντος πρώτῃ μεταλήψει μεταλαμβάνον πρόεισι· πρόεισι γὰρ ἀεὶ ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς· ἐνέργεια γὰρ πανταχοῦ φθάνει καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτου ἀποστατεῖ. (Plotinus, *Enneades* III, 8,5,10–14; ed. P. Henry, H.-R. Schwyzer, 367)

32 P. Papageorgiou, "Plotinus and Eunomios: A Parallel Theology of the Three Hypostases", *GOTR* 37 (1992) 215–231.

33 R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy. 318–381*, Edinburgh 1988, 631–632.

34 ὡς οὖν γεννᾶταί τις ἐκ τοῦ σωτῆρος, σοφὸς ἐκ σοφίας, καὶ ἀληθὴς ἐξ ἀληθείας, καὶ ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς, ἐκ τῆς πάντων ἀρχῆς καὶ γεννήσεως μιᾶς οὔσης, οὕτως καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἅγιος καὶ

One notes that the reading of *life from life* is connected to the couplet of *wise from Wisdom* and *true from Truth*, where the two terms of the formula are an abstract noun and an adjective that is derived from it. The meaning is clearly quite different than Gregory's use in *CE* III, because the formula connects, as in Plotinus, two different ontological levels. The explicit reference to generation remains important, which is parallel to Plotinian reference to procession. In this manner, in its beginning, the formula of *life from life* is tied to reflection on the divine attributes and generation.

These precedents can explain the interpretive ambiguity that is reflected in the history of the formula, which, significantly, reappears among the sources of the Council of Nicaea. The citation is found in the letter of Eusebius of Caesarea written in June 325 to the faithful of his community.[35] Eusebius professes to believe:

> in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life (ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς), Only-Begotten Son, engendered before any creature (Col 1, 15), engendered from the Father before the ages, by whom everything was made (Jn 1, 3).[36]

Life from Life follows the two Nicene formulations. It appears that this expression is from Eusebius' theology itself, since he also uses it in *De ecclesiastica theologia*:

> God from God, Light from Light, and Life from Life, with unspeakable, ineffable reasons that are absolutely unknown and unfathomable to us, engendered from the Father for the salvation of the universe.[37]

πνευματικός, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος καθαιρόμενος. καὶ πρὸς καρποφορίαν ποτιζόμενος γεννᾶται ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος (Origen, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis* 121bis: E. Preuschen, *GCS* 10).

35 Cf. H. von Campenhausen, "Das Bekenntnis Eusebs von Caesarea (Nicea 325)", *ZNtW* 67 (1976) 123–130.

36 εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς, υἱὸν μονογενῆ, πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως, πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεγεννημένον, δι᾽ οὗ καὶ ἐγένετο τὰ πάντα· (Eusebius, *Epistula ad Cesarienses* 4; ed. H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, II.1, 29, 12–14 and III.1, 43, 10–12).

37 θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ καὶ φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς καὶ ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς, ἀλέκτοις καὶ ἀρρήτοις καὶ παντάπασιν ἀγνώστοις ἡμῖν καὶ ἀκαταλήπτοις λόγοις ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ὅλων γεγεννημένον (Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica theologia,* I, 8, 2; *GCS* 14, 66, 20–23).

The meaning of this text can be clarified by the fact that Eusebius applies the expression αὐτοζωή to the Son in the same context.[38] The point here is to manifest the radical difference of the life of the Son, and thus of his generation, with respect to all creatures. At the same time, the Son appears to be engendered for the salvation of the world, even if in an unfathomable manner.

In fact, Athanasius considers Eusebius' letter to be unorthodox, to the point that he calls it ἀρειανόφρονος in the title placed before it in *De decretis Nicaenae synodi.*[39] The expression "He was not before generation" (πρὸ τοῦ γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν), which closes the letter, also contributed to this.[40]

The difficulty in interpretation is compounded by the fact that the same letter is also quoted by Socrates, but in another form that does not correspond with the version known by Athanasius on 42 points.[41] It includes the formula of *Life from Life*,[42] while reference to not existing before generation has disappeared. Socrates' direct source could be the Macedonian Bishop, Sabinus of Heraclea.[43]

This ambiguity is also reflected in the Arian claim of including Denys of Alexandria on their side through the use of the formula ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς:

> But he destroys their allegation that He was made 'of nothing', by saying that the Word was like a river from a well, and a shoot from a stock, and a child from a parent, and Light from Light, and Life from Life. And he overthrows their barring off and separating the Word from God, by saying that the Triad is, without division and without diminution, gathered together into the Monad.[44]

38 Cf. *ibidem*, I, 8, 3 and I, 8, 4: 66, 25 and 33.

39 Cf. H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, II.1, 28, 28.

40 Eusebius, *Epistula ad Cesarienses* 16; ed. H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, II.1, 31, 6 and III.1, 46, 16.

41 Cf. SC 477, 104–5,1.

42 Cf. Socrates *Historia Ecclesistica*, I, 8, 38 (SC 477, 104).

43 Cf. W. D. Hauschild, "Die Antinizänische Sammlung des Sabinus von Heraclea", *VC* 24 (1970) 105–126, 108.

44 τὸν λόγον εἶναι ὡς ποταμὸν ἀπὸ πηγῆς καὶ βλαστὸν ἀπὸ ῥίζης καὶ τέκνον ἀπὸ γονέως καὶ φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς καὶ ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀποσχοινίζειν καὶ διαιρεῖν αὐτοὺς τὸν λόγον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ διαβάλλει λέγων αὐτὸς ἀδιαίρετον καὶ ἀμείωτον τὴν τριάδα εἰς μονάδα συγκεφαλαιοῦσθαι, (Athanasius, *De sententia Dionysii* 19.1.8–3.2; ed. H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, II.1, 60, 15–18). This is a comment to Dionysius' text in 18.5.1 (60, 9). The translation is from NPNF, vol. 4.

The obvious risk of the formulation is that procession could be understood in an emanationist sense, or as mere participation; and Denys' examples reinforce this interpretation. In this light, Athanasius' intervention is perhaps the explanation of why *Life from Life* did not appear in the Nicene Creed together with *Light from Light*: The derivative formulas required an interpretation, which Nicaea attempted to delineate through the inclusion of the formula of light between *God from God* and *true God from true God*. A multiplication of material derivative formulas, by adding in *Life from Life* as well, would have weakened the expression.

Thus, both orthodox and Arians use derivative language. This can be seen in the highly interesting creed of the synod of Antioch of 341, which was the oriental response to the Council of Rome, of the same year, that had rehabilitated Athanasius. Eusebius of Caesarea was already dead, and the person with most influence was Eusebius of Nicodemia.[45] They profess to believe:

> And in one Lord Jesus Christ, his Son, God the Only-Begotten, through whom all things were made: begotten of the Father before all ages, God from God, Whole from Whole, Only from Only, Perfect from Perfect, King from King, Lord from Lord (Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ, ὅλον ἐξ ὅλου, μόνον ἐκ μόνου, τέλειον ἐκ τελείου, βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως, κύριον ἀπὸ κυρίου); the living Word, the Wisdom, the Life, the True Light, the Way of Truth, the Resurrection, the Shepherd, the Gate; immutable and inconvertible; the perfect image of the divinity, substance, power, counsel, and glory of the Father.[46]

The formula ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς does not appear in the text, while one finds the expressions βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως and κύριον ἀπὸ κυρίου, which are also used by Gregory of Nyssa in the text in question of ch. 8 of *Eun* III. One notes that Gregory's use of the expressions is bold, because the subordinationist interpretation of the expression κύριος ἐκ κυρίου had been anathematized at Sirmium in 351. The formula was considered heretical if it was used to say that the Father and the Son

45 Cf. M. Simonetti, *Il Cristo.* II, *Testi teologici e spirituali in lingua greca dal IV al VII secolo*, Milan 1986, 126–127.

46 καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ Θεὸν, δι᾽ οὗ τὰ πάντα, τὸν γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ, ὅλον ἐξ ὅλου, μόνον ἐκ μόνου, τέλειον ἐκ τελείου, βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως, κύριον ἀπὸ κυρίου, λόγον ζῶντα, σοφίαν, ζωὴν, φῶς ἀληθινὸν, ὁδὸν ἀληθείας, ἀνάστασιν, ποιμένα, θύραν, ἄτρεπτόν τε καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, τὴν τῆς θεότητος, οὐσίας τε καὶ δυνάμεως, καὶ βουλῆς καὶ δόξης τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀπαράλλακτον εἰκόνα (Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica,* II, 10, 35–42 [SC 493, 44]) See also H. C. Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke: Dokumente Zur Geschichte Des Arianischen Streites*, Berlin 2007, 145–146.

are two gods.[47] The same is true for βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως, which only appears in the Arian synod of Antioch.

The sequence of expressions used in the profession of faith at Antioch thus comprises the text closest to Gregory's. The explanation he develops in *CE* III on the relationship of attributes, generation, and relation appears to aim to resolve the ambiguity of the derivative formulas, and thus to specify the interpretation of their Nicene use.

In light of what has been said in the preceding section, one can understand why Gregory accepts the formulas of ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς, βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως and κύριον ἀπὸ κυρίου—while he cannot accept the couplet of ὅλον ἐξ ὅλου, μόνον ἐκ μόνου. This last not only leads one to understand the Son as a distinct hypostasis from the Father, but as a substance that is separated from Him.

Gregory had already used the formula ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς at the end of *Eun* I, again connecting it to the discussion of attributes and their relational interpretation:

> If the Son is instead always understood as present in existence, insofar as expressed together with the notion of Father, why should we fear attributing eternity to the Only-Begotten, since He has neither beginning of days nor end of life? For, as He is light from light, life from life, good from good, and wise, just, powerful, and all the other qualities in the same way, being such from such (ἐκ τοιούτου τοιοῦτος), so is He absolutely eternal from eternal.[48]

In a certain sense, Gregory explicates the model of every derivative formula in ἐκ τοιούτου τοιοῦτος. *Eun* III can thus be considered a treatise with a fundamental historical role in the hermeneutics of Nicene doctrine.

The occurrence of the formula ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς in the *De Trinitate* of Pseudo Didymus the Blind is of interest here. While commenting Jn 6.57, we read:

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47 Εἴ τις ἀκούων κύριον τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν κύριον, καὶ κύριον τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν (ἐπεὶ κύριος ἐκ κυρίου) δύο λέγοι θεούς, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. (Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 30, 60 [SC 493, 140])

48 εἰ δὲ ἀεὶ ἐν τῷ εἶναι καταλαμβάνεται ὁ υἱὸς τῇ περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐννοίᾳ συναναφαινόμενος, τίς ὁ φόβος προσμαρτυρεῖν τῷ μονογενεῖ τὸ ἀΐδιον, τῷ μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς ἔχοντι τέλος; ὡς γὰρ ἐκ φωτὸς φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ ἀγαθὸς σοφός τε καὶ δίκαιος καὶ δυνατὸς καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ὡσαύτως ἐκ τοιούτου τοιοῦτος, οὕτω καὶ ἐξ ἀϊδίου πάντως ἀΐδιος. (*CE* I 688,1–8: GNO I 223,27–224,5)

> the Saviour speaks in this way either to adapt to the expressive form of the economy, or because He is Life from paternal Life, Light from Light, and God from God.[49]

This is a sophisticated text that appears to presuppose Gregory's reflection, because it allows for two interpretive possibilities of the formula of *Life from Life* as applied to Christ—which it understands here in reference to the economy and the Lord's human nature, or in reference to immanence, and thus eternal generation.

The two interpretive possibilities are clarified here through opposition: In the case that the derivation implies an ontological inferiority, as with the incarnation and Christ's created nature, or in the case where derivation implies perfect equality and identity of nature, as with the eternal procession of the Son from the Father.

Pseudo Didymus the Blind has recourse to *Truth from Truth*, another derivative formula in Gregory's list in ch. 8 of *Eun* III. This highly original Pneumatological use also appears sophisticated: in PG 39, 705b, while commenting *send your truth and light* (Ps 43.3), the verse of the Psalm is read in reference to the two processions of the Son and the Spirit. *Light from Light* is applied to the second Person, while *Truth from Truth* is applied to the third. This is clearly a text written in a more peaceful dogmatic climate than the one in which Gregory works.[50] Gregory's theological effort appears to have produced its fruits in a Trinitarian theology that establishes the interpretation of the Nicene Creed in an orthodox sense.

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49 Ἢ γὰρ ἕνεκα τοῦ προλεχθέντος τῆς οἰκονομίας εἴρηται τρόπου, ἢ διὰ τὸ πε φηνέναι αὐτὸν ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς πατρικῆς, ὡς καὶ φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς, καὶ Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ. (Ps. Didymus the Blind, *De Trinitate*, PG 39, 860AB)

50 Reference to the Holy Spirit in a derivative formula can be found in a passage of Epiphanius' *Ancoratus*. Epiphanius applies both *Light from Light* and *Life from Life* to the Son, together with the formula *Spirit from Spirit* applied to the third Person: εἰ δὲ φῶς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, φῶς ἄρα 70.6 ἐκ φωτὸς ὁ υἱὸς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο φῶς οἰκῶν τὸ ἀπρόσιτον. δύναμις δὲ ὅλος ὁ θεὸς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὁ υἱὸς κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων· σοφία ὅλος ὁ θεός, οὐκοῦν σοφία ὁ υἱὸς ἐκ σοφίας, ἐν ᾧ πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας ἀπόκρυφοι· ζωὴ δὲ ὅλος ὁ θεός, οὐκοῦν 70.7 ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς ὁ υἱός· ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή. τὸ δὲ ἅγιον πνεῦμα παρὰ ἀμφοτέρων, πνεῦμα ἐκ πνεύματος. πνεῦμα γὰρ ὁ θεός (Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 70.5.2–7.3: ed. K. Holl, GCS 25).

Conclusion: A New Ontology

This hermeneutic operation however required the development of a new ontological investigation. For, while Eunomius remains anchored to a purely philosophical conception of divine attributes, typical of Platonic gnoseology, Gregory breaks the necessary connection between names and things, far surpassing neoplatonical derivative ontology. He does this through a new metaphysics that is an extension of classical metaphysics, which reinterprets the divine attributes in light of the relations and the personal dimension. The divine attributes are thus reinterpreted in a properly theological sense.

This translates into the relationship of distinction without separation between economy and immanence: The ontological ladder that unites Heaven and earth in continuity is broken, and the possibility of raising oneself from below to above by means of human reason alone has disappeared. God can thus be known to man only if He reveals himself, i.e., only through his action. There is therefore no *a priori* knowledge of God, but only *a posteriori* knowledge—as a gift that comes from above.

The articulation of immanence and economy thus corresponds to the fact that, for Eunomius, ontology and gnoseology are practically identical, because names are connected to things in a necessary way, while for Gregory, names are relative to actions.

Knowledge that is acquired in this way is real, because God acts as He is, and He gives himself as He truly is, i.e., as the one and triune God. He reveals his Being in action. In divine action one can thus recognize the personal characteristic of each divine Hypostasis *a posteriori*. These personal characteristics consist in their manner of existing as God, in the πως εἶναι that Gregory identifies with the πρός τι—with relation. In this manner, one can know immanence itself through the economy, without thereby capturing it. The names themselves can integrate this dynamic because they are shadows of the Hypostases' movements. Language cannot express essences, which remain beyond the limits of understanding, protected by Gregory's extreme realism. At the same time however, language can state the relations, and thus, thanks to Trinitarian revelation, can truly allow us to speak of divine immanence.

Gregory thus manages to magisterially present how God does not lose himself in His self-gift to us, while affirming the reality of the relationship with Him at the same time, without the Mystery ceasing to be such. This required the development of a new metaphysical depth in relation to Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought. Next to the substantial level one situates, at the same ontological summit, the relational and communional dimension.

This is reflected in the divine attributes, which Gregory reinterprets in a theological perspective. His reinterpretation of unity is the primary example. The entire development of Trinitarian theology is ordered towards showing how God is not one as solitary, but is one as a communion of Persons. The unity of the Christian God is far more than the unity-solitude of Aristotle's God. Gregory's operation in *Eun* III, and in his Trinitarian doctrine in general, can be considered a theological demonstration of the following affirmation: God is not one despite being triune, but He is one precisely because He is triune.

The derivative formulas of the Nicene Creed are thus situated in an interpretation that takes account of Christian salvation. The death of Christ has truly saved us, because He is truly God, insofar as God from God, and true Light, insofar as Light from Light. Gregory develops this through the formula of *Life from Life*, which from its early use was tied to discussion surrounding Nicaea. The power of this formula comes from the fact that Life immediately designates salvation from death. God is eternal Life, so that the Son must be eternal Life in order to save us. The attribute implicates procession, i.e., the communication of this life. At the same time, it also implies the names of the first two divine Persons, because the Father is Father precisely in engendering the Son, i.e., in giving Life to Him, just as the Son is such in receiving the fullness of divine Life from the Father.

> In this manner the attributes are theologized, i.e., they are reinterpreted in a manner that is consistent with Trinitarian revelation. True Life is not that of the first motor that thinks itself and has no relation to anything outside itself, but it is the Life that engenders another Life, Life that includes procession, and thus relation, in itself. Thus true unity is that of generation, and neither Aristotelian nor Neoplatonic unity. The attributes are theologized by inserting procession into them, and by reinterpreting them in terms of relations.[51]

This is made possible through a metaphysical development where the dimension of relation and communion is recognized to be ontologically originating

51 A. Radde-Gallwitz has recently analysed divine simplicity in an interesting study: The concept of simplicity is understood as mutual immanence of attributes. It appears in Gregory's thought and is explained from the basis of the correlativity of the virtues (A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009, 212). It appears that the metaphysical shift presented here represents the most radical foundation of the level of theological grammar.

and founding. The thesis is clearly bold, because the Nicene *homoousios* was presented for some time as a philosophical corruption of the purity of Christian faith, which would have been contaminated by Greek thought. The work of Gregory of Nyssa, the most speculative of the Cappadocians, can perhaps be interpreted as a demonstration that orthodox theology not only did not compromise with pagan philosophical thought, but also courageously developed a new conception of the real—pushed to this by the sense of the Scriptures themselves, i.e., by the reality of Christian salvation. If Greek ontology was born of the wonder before Being as perceived in created reality, Gregory's Trinitarian ontology is born of the encounter with the one and triune God, the God whose only name is *wonder*.

Gregor von Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* III, Tomus IX

Ekkehard Mühlenberg

Tomus IX ist wie alle Teile des dritten Buches gegen Eunomius selbständig konzipiert. W. Jaeger hat diesen Teil in 64 Paragraphen und 11 Abschnitte eingeteilt; die 11 Abschnitte markieren den Sprachfluß Gregors sehr gut.[1] Ich will beschreiben, wie Gregor vorgeht und worin seine theologische Leistung besteht.

Tomus IX unterscheidet sich von allen anderen. Es gibt eine Einleitung und einen Schluß. Nach einem Zitat aus des Eunomius *Apologie der Apologie* schlägt Gregor auf die Pauke.[2] Endlich, sagt er, endlich lasse Eunomius seine Maske fallen. Er spreche die Blasphemie unverblümt aus. Jetzt, endlich, brauche ich ihm die Blasphemie nicht mehr detektivisch nachzuweisen. Mein Zitat spreche für sich selbst, triumphiert Gregor. Er unterläßt es aber nicht, die Blasphemie in eigenen Worten herauszustellen;[3] er füllt auch weitere 24 GNO-Druckseiten und kommt zu einem unüberbietbaren Schluß: „Verdient er einen

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1 Die Vortragsform ist nur leicht verändert worden. Kapitelsummarien sind irgendwann vorangestellt worden, erscheinen aber nicht im Text. H. C. Ogle – H. A. Wilson, *Gregory of Nyssa: Against Eunomius, Book III*, NPNF, ser. II vol. 5, Oxford 1893, 230–239, setzen die fünf Kapitelsummarien in den Text, so daß sich fünf große Abschnitte ergeben: A. §§ 1–9; B. § 10–21 (GNO II 271,26); C. §§ 21 (GNO II 271,26)—41; D. §§ 42–46; E. §§ 47–64. Innerhalb dieser Kapitel gibt es insgesamt acht Absätze, von denen vier mit Jaeger übereinstimmen.—C. Moreschini (*Gregorio di Nissa. Teologia trinitaria. Contro Eunomio, Confutazione della professione di fede di Eunomio*, Milano 1994) teilt den Text durch elf Überschriften, meist den Absätzen Jaegers folgend, und einigen zusätzlichen Absätzen, an vier Stellen Paragraphen Jaegers verändernd.—Jaegers elf Absätze in *CE* III tomus IX (GNO II 264–288) sind:
IX 1–10 (Eunomiuszitat in § 1):
IX 11–19 (Auslegung von *Matthäus* 19,17);
IX 20–25 (Eunomiuszitat in § 22 und § 23 = tom. VIII 43+IX 1);
IX 26–31 (Eunomiuszitat in § 27);
IX 32–36 (Eunomiuszitat in § 32):
IX 37–41 (Eunomiuszitat in § 37 ~ Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 18,22–23 Seboüé; Auslegung von *Exodus* 3);
IX 42–43 Reflexion über die angemessene Länge der Widerlegung;
IX 44–46 Erinnerung an das Grundthema des Eunomius;
IX 47–52 (Eunomiuszitat in § 47. 48 und 52);
IX 53–60 (Eunomiuszitat in § 53 und 54);
IX 61–64 (Eunomiuszitat in § 61).

2 Siehe §§ 1–2.

3 § 2 (GNO II 264,24–265,3).

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anderen Namen als Antichrist?“[4] Gregor führt zu dem Schlußsatz durch eine Anrede an die Eunomiusanhänger: „Macht ihr euch immer noch nicht klar, daß seine Verkündigung vom Teufel als Einübung, Vorbereitung und Beginn der Ankunft des Antichristen vorausgeplant ist?“ Übrigens versäumt es Gregor auch in diesem Zusammenhang nicht, seine Gründe zu nennen.

Ich sagte, dieser Schluß sei unüberbietbar. Oft, ja fast durchgehend wird die Schreiberei des Eunomius in *Contra Eunomium* III nicht nur Irrsinn (ἀτοπία),[5] sondern vor allem Blasphemie (und Gottlosigkeit) genannt; aber ohne vorherige Aufdeckung ist die Blasphemie nur hier am Anfang von Tomus IX klar zu Tage liegend.[6] Und der Ausdruck Antichrist wird nur hier und sonst nirgendwo angewendet.[7] Es ist also eine unüberbietbare Verurteilung des Eunomius.

Den Text, der zwischen der rhetorischen Rahmung steht, will ich unter drei Gesichtspunkten beschreiben. 1. Des Eunomius Ausführungen. 2. Gregors Widerlegungsformen. 3. Theologische Darlegungen Gregors.

1 Des Eunomius Ausführungen

Es werden 11 Eunomiuszitate von Gregor angeführt.[8] Nun ist zu erinnern, daß wir es mit Schichten zu tun haben. Eunomius schrieb seine *Apologie*: Schicht

4 § 64 (GNO II 288,17).

5 Vgl. *Lexicon Gregorianum* I, s.v.

6 Diese Feststellung macht Gregor aber auch an ein paar anderen Stellen; vgl. *Lexicon Gregorianum* II, βλασφημία B.3h.

7 Vgl. *Lexicon Gregorianum* I, ἀντίχριστος.

8 In Kenntnis von R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius: The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 124–126 notiere ich die Stellen nach den Paragraphen Jaegers (und dessen Seiten) und gebe an, auf welche Basiliusstellen (*Adversus Eunomium*, ed. Sesboüé) sich Eunomius bezieht.
IX 1 (GNO II 264,4–12): Dieses Zitat kann syntaktisch wie auch inhaltlich an das Zitat in VIII 43 (GNO II 254,27–255,3) angeschlossen werden (vgl. IX 22). VIII 43 bezieht sich auf Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 18,13–15; IX 1, 27,32 und 37 insgesamt auf *Adv. Eun.* II 18. (IX 1 zieht *Mk* 10,18; *Lk* 18,19; *Mt* 19,17 heran).
IX 22 (GNO II 272,1.5–6) wiederholen VIII 43 (zur Bibelstelle *Exodus* 3,14).
IX 22–23 (GNO II 272,12–14 und 17–23) wiederholen IX 1.
IX 27 (GNO II 273,24–274,2): zur Auslegung von *Exodus* 3.
IX 32 (GNO II 276,4–7): zur Auslegung von *Exodus* 3.
IX 37 (GNO II 277,27–278,2): Eunomius nimmt den Satz des Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 18,22–23 (ἄγγελον τοίνυν προτάξαντα τῆς διηγήσεως ἡ γραφή, θεοῦ ἐπάγει φωνήν) auf.
IX 42 (GNO II 280,1) vermerkt Gregor Auslassung.
IX 47 (GNO II 281,19–20.22–24): vgl. Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 19,43 (und II 18,11–12).
IX 48 (GNO II 282,4–10): vgl. Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 19.

1. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* widerlegte des Eunomius *Apologie* in drei Büchern: Schicht 2. Eunomius schrieb 15 Jahre später eine *Apologie der Apologie* und zwar zwei Bücher gegen des Basilius *Adversus Eunomium* I: Schicht 3. Gregor schreibt gegen die beiden Bücher des Eunomius sein *Contra Eunomium* I + II; Zeit etwa 380/381: Schicht 4. Dann, so wird angenommen, schrieb Eunomius ein drittes Buch der *Apologie der Apologie* gegen des Basilius *Adv. Eunomium* II. Da es denkbar und nicht unwahrscheinlich ist, daß Eunomius Gregors Widerlegung seines verstorbenen Bruders gesehen hat, setze ich eine eigene Schicht an. Ich kann diese Schicht bisher nicht nachweisen, aber sie sollte nicht ausgeschlossen werden: also Schicht 5. Dann hat Gregor sein *Contra Eunomium* III geschrieben: Schicht 6. Sie, verehrte Zuhörer, wissen nun Bescheid; ich habe ja nur erinnert, was seit C. H. G. Rettberg, F. Diekamp und W. Jaeger bekannt ist.[9] Man soll auch erinnern, daß jede Schicht vergleichbar ist z.B. einer Runde im Boxkampf.

Schicht 1 (= des Eunomius *Apologia*) liegt vollständig vor, ebenso Schicht 2, des Basilius Widerlegung. Danach vergehen etwa 15 Jahre; es veränderte sich die kirchenpolitische Situation, aber wahrscheinlich auch die trinitarische Diskussion. Wir sollten wenigstens in der Vorstellung diese Veränderung bedenken, auch wenn wir sie in bestimmteren Gedanken kaum fassen können. Schicht 3 betreffs Eunomius und Schicht 5 betreffs Eunomius muß rekonstruiert werden. Die Quelle für Schicht 5 ist Gregor, *Contra Eunomium* III, und Schicht 5 präsentiert sich als Verteidigung gegen Basilius, *Adv. Eunomium* II. Basilius hatte die Urapologie kontinuierlich Stück für Stück zitiert, in *Adv. Eun.* II beginnend mit *Apologia* 12 und endend mit *Apologia* 20; es gibt ein paar

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IX 51 (GNO II 283,11–15) und IX 52 (GNO II 283,15–19): Gregor vermerkt Auslassung.

IX 52 (GNO II 283,20–21): ein Satz aus ausgelassenem Zusammenhang zitiert.

IX 53 (GNO II 283,29–284,2): gegen Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 19,45–53.

IX 53 (GNO II 284,6–10): Gregor vermerkt Auslassung.

IX 54 (GNO II 284,12–19): Gregor gibt eine Zusammenfassung; vgl. Vaggione, *Eunomius*, 1987, 125 mit Anm. 53. Zu Basilius vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 19,1–37, richtiger wahrscheinlich II 22,42–43; siehe unten Anm. 18.

IX 54 (GNO II 284,20–25): gegen Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 22,22–32.

IX 61 (GNO II 287,16–17): Es ist nicht genau ersichtlich, wie Eunomius seinen dogmatischern Ersatz von „Vater" mit der Taufformel verknüpft hat. Vaggione (126 Anm. 56) möchte die Wörter für ein Interpretament Gregors halten. Basilius bezog sich auf die Taufformel in *Adv. Eun.* II 22,20–32. Vgl. auch unten Anm. 44.

9 C. H. G. Rettberg, *Marcelliana, accedit Eunomii ΕΚΘΕΣΙΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ emendatior, edidit et animadversionibus instruxit*, Göttingen 1794 (L. Abramowski verweist zu Recht auf Seite 145f. in: "Eunomius", *RAC* 6 (1966) 940).—F. Diekamp, "Literargeschichtliches zur eunomianischen Kontroverse", *ByZ* 18 (1909) 1–13.—W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni libri II*, Leiden 1960, VI–XIII.

Auslassungen, die er anzeigt.[10] Für die *Apologie der Apologie* gibt Gregor wenig Hinweise auf Zitate aus Basilius, die Eunomius vorgelegt habe.[11] Wir können uns die Darstellungsweise des Eunomius nicht genau vorstellen. Es scheint, als ob Gregor aus Eunomius, *Apologie der Apologie* III, diejenigen Passagen ausschreibt, in denen er die Blasphemie nachweisen kann.[12] Was Tomus IX angeht, so haben wir drei Kapitel und können auch angeben, welche Ausführungen des Basilius Eunomius bespricht. Der erste Komplex beginnt in *CE* VIII 34 und nimmt des Basilius Satz *Adv. Eun*. II 18,45–47 auseinander.[13] Dann zerlegt Eunomius genüßlich des Basilius Verweis auf *Exodus* 3, wo Christus der Sprecher des Satzes sein soll: „Ich bin der Seiende" (*Ex* 3,14).[14] Dazu hat Eunomius den ingeniösen Einfall, das Herrenwort: „Niemand ist gut denn der eine Gott" (*Mt* 19,17 par.) gegen die Gleichsetzung von „der Seiende" mit dem Gottessohn zu nutzen. Komplex Eins liest sich in fünf Zitaten wie ein kontinuierlicher Text (VIII 43 = IX 22; IX 1. 27. 32. 37).[15]

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10 Übersicht bei V. H. Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Caesarea. Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neunizäner,* FKDG 66, Göttingen 1996, 50 nach der Edition der *Apologie* von R. P. Vaggione. Man müßte die Angaben des Basilius über Auslassungen und Zusammenfassungen zufügen.

11 In Tomus IX gibt es keine expliziten Hinweise auf Basiliuszitate oder -texte. Ansonsten vgl. z.B. *CE* III tom. II 161; III 16,58–59; V 19–20; VII 15 (bes. GNO II 220,12–18); VIII 34.

12 R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works,* Oxford 1987, 89–95 schreibt betreffs des von Gregor mitgeteilten Inhalts teils an der Sache vorbei; denn letztlich gibt er zu, daß Gregor keinen dogmatischen Traktat verfaßt hat, wie auch Eunomius keinen dogmatischen Traktat schrieb, sondern eine Widerlegung von *Adversus Eunomium* II, wo Basilius mit der Widerlegung von *Apologia* 12 begann. Aber recht hat er: „. . .we must always be conscious . . . that many of the surviving fragments have been chosen for their damaging potential" (94). Jedoch behaupte ich auf der Basis von Tomus IX, daß Gregor keine Bibelstelle, die Eunomius gegen seinen Gegner verwendet, unbeantwortet läßt. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa* (siehe Anm. 1) weist darauf hin: „Il terzo libro, invece, ha una funzione differente, perché ha lo scopo di fornire principalmente l'interpretazione ortodossa di alcuni passi scritturistici sui quali si basava Eunomio (ma non soltanto lui: anche altri ariani in generale) per costruire la sua dottrina." Auch in den beiden anderen Büchern fänden sich Bibelauslegungen (XXXII–XXXIII, vgl. XLIX–LVI).

13 Basilius: ὥστε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Μωσέως ὄντα ἑαυτὸν ὀνομάσας, οὐκ ἄλλος τις ἂν παρὰ τὸν θεὸν λόγον, τὸν ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄτα πρὸς τὸν θεόν, νοηθείη.

14 Des Basilius Satz siehe unten Anm. 27.

15 IX 37 beginnt: Ἀλλ' ἀντιλέγει τοῖς εἰρημένοις αὐτὴν τὴν γραφὴν προτεινόμενος λέγουσαν ἀγγέλου προτετάχθαι φωνήν, καὶ οὕτως ἐπῆχθαι τὸν τοῦ ὄντος διάλογον (GNO II 277,26–278,2). „Aber er widerspricht meinen Ausführungen, indem er die Schrift selbst vorlegt, die sage, daß eines Engels Stimme vorangestellt sei und so der Dialog ‚des Seienden' eingeführt werde." Basilius schrieb: ἄγγελον τοίνυν προτάξασα τῆς διηγήσεως ἡ γραφή, θεοῦ ἐπάγει φωνήν (*Adv. Eun*. II 18,22–23).

Der zweite Komplex: Eunomius verteidigt seine ursprüngliche Beschreibung, wie der Gottessohn als Schöpfergott die Schöpfung überragt, und erläutert es gegen Basilius. Komplex Zwei setzt sich aus drei Zitaten zusammen; Gregor vermerkt seine Auslassungen zwischen den Zitaten (IX 47+48; 52. 53).[16] Im dritten Komplex wendet sich Eunomius gegen des Basilius Vorwurf, daß er, Eunomius, kein Christ sei.[17] Am Ende einer längeren Polemik formuliert Eunomius seine eigene Überzeugung und stellt fest, daß die exakte Dogmatik über Christsein und Nicht-Christsein entscheide. Gregor bietet eine Zusammenfassung und dann ein Zitat (IX 54, mit 61).

2 Widerlegungsformen Gregors

In Tomus IX nutzt Gregor seine rhetorischen Fähigkeiten, um den Eunomius zu widerlegen. Seine Polemik ist bissig, sie ist teilweise sarkastisch. So geht Gregor auch sonst gegen Eunomius vor. Andere mögen die rhetorischen Sprachverwandtschaften untersuchen und identifizieren; teils ist das auch schon geschehen. Ob Eunomius gemäßigter ist, bezweifle ich. Gregor teilt davon nur an einer Stelle etwas mit, und es zeigt Eunomius nicht in vornehmer Mäßigung (vgl. § 54).[18] Aber es fällt auf, daß die von Gregor vorgelegten Zitate in philosophisch-theologischer Sprache abgefaßt sind.

Gregors Anklage lautet: Blasphemie. So wird Tomus IX eröffnet. Wer nicht bekennt, daß der Gottessohn die gleiche Ehre und Würde besitzt wie Gott Vater, der Seiende nach *Exodus* 3,14, der begeht Blasphemie. Das ist ganz einfach und ganz eindeutig, und Eunomius wußte auch, daß er den Gottessohn nicht mit Gott Vater gleichstellte. Gregor war sich jedoch bewußt, daß Eunomius als christlicher Theologe auftrat und Anhängerschaft unter Christen hatte und daß ebend über das Wesen des Gottseins Christi gestritten wurde, kirchenpolitisch erbittert gestritten wurde. Deswegen weist Gregor in verschiedener Weise nach, wie sich die Anklage auf Blasphemie konkretisieren läßt. Dabei greift er auf allgemeinchristliche Vorstellungen zurück. Von den 11 Abschnitten, die Jaeger vorschlägt, enden alle in einer allgemein einleuchtenden Verurteilung, abgesehen von 2 Abschnitten, die ohne jede Polemik sind (§ 11–19 und § 37–41;

16 Vgl. die Bezüge zu Basilius oben Anm. 8.

17 Vgl. Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 22,20–32.

18 Vgl. IX 54 (GNO II 284,12–19). Da Eunomius den Basilius den gnostischen Häretikern zuzählt, die das Unerkennbare Gottes gelehrt hätten, könnte der Anknüpfungspunkt der Satz sein: τὸν μὲν τρόπον καθ' ὃν ἐγέννησεν ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἄρρητον καὶ ἀπερινόητον ἀφιέντα (Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* II 22,42–43).

§ 42–43 hier unberücksichtigt). Wir finden: schlimmer als Marcion (§ 10); er judaisiere (§ 31) und führe die Lehre der Synagoge in die Kirche ein (§ 36); blanke Blasphemie (§ 51/52); Übertreter = Leugner des Christseins (§ 60); er sei der Antichrist (§ 64). Dazu kommt „Trauerklage" wegen Unbildung (§ 25) und Sarkasmus wegen logischen Irrsinns (§ 46). Ich habe die Abschlüsse der Jaegerabschnitte zitiert: Judentum, Griechentum oder bekannte Häresie—mindestens in einen dieser Abgründe mußte der Gegner versenkt werden. Eunomius arbeitete genauso.

Abgesehen von Regeln rhetorischer Technik kommt ein weiterer Vorwurf vor, natürlich auch außerhalb von Tomus IX. Gregor verurteilt die logischen Konstruktionen des Eunomius als Spiegelfechterei, aber nicht als ein Denkspiel, sondern als absichtliche Täuschung der Leser. Gregors Worte: „Da er aber seinen Betrug von der Maske des Täuschers befreit…" (§ 2; GNO II 264,16–17). Ogle/Wilson: „But now that he has stripped his falsehood of every mask that could disguise it." Eunomius wird böse Gesinnung unterstellt (κακόνοια).[19] Er sei ein schlechter, ein böser Mensch. Im Gegenzug weist Gregor mehrmals den Vorwurf zurück, daß er die Darlegungen des Eunomius böswillig verdreht habe—natürlich auch ein rhetorisches Füllsel.[20]

Weiterhin benutzt Gregor, was im Boxsport „Tiefschläge" heißt. Ich beschreibe es mal anders. Vor etwa 35 Jahren haben wir in Oregon/U.S.A. gezeltet, tief in den Wäldern, allein, nur mit Kühen, die wir sahen, und Bären, die wir nicht sahen. Am Abend, im Dunkeln bei großem Lagerfeuer, spielte ich mit unserem Sohn ein Holzspiel. Es gab Holzbausteine verschiedenster Formen und verschiedenster Größen, die sollten aufeinandergelegt werden, und dann fiel der Turm bei einem Spieler um, und dieser Spieler hatte verloren. Ähnliches tut Gregor. Er häuft Argumente aus Konsequenzen, die Eunomius impliziere, aufeinander, bis am Ende die Absurdität herauskommt, der Haufen Argumente also zusammenfällt und Eunomius verloren hat. Das geht beispielsweise so (§ 6–8):

Wenn also nur Gott Vater das Attribut gut allein und ausschließlich zukomme, sind alle anderen und auch der Gottessohn davon ausgeschlossen. Jeder wisse, wer der, welcher weder in Natur noch in Attribut das Gute besitze, sei—„ich fürchte den blasphemischen Namen," schiebt Gregor ein und spricht

19 GNO II 264,21; vgl. *Lexicon Gregorianum* V, s.v. R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000, 87–93 versucht, für die Unterstellung einer bösen Gesinnung (κακόνοια) dem Eunomius, der seinen Gegnern eben dieses auch vorwirft, eine rationale Theorie anzudichten.

20 Vgl. § 3 (GNO II 265,4–9); § 11 (GNO II 267,15–17) und § 12 (GNO II 267,18–19); § 61 (GNO II 287,8–11). Stichwort: συκοφαντία.

ihn nicht aus. Nun geht es bei Gregor weiter: Denn jedem ist klar …—Denn wer den Namen gut nicht hat …—Denn wer nicht tapfer ist …—Denn was bedarf es noch vieler Worte …—„Denn welch klareren Beweis für seine Schlechtigkeit könnte man finden als die Verneinung, daß der gut ist, der ‘es nicht für einen Raub hielt, Gott gleich zu sein, sondern erniedrigte sich selber und nahm Knechtsgestalt an’ (*Phil* 2,6–7)—tat er das nicht aus reiner Gütigkeit?“ Folgen noch 5 weitere ausdruckskräftige Bibelworte,[21] und man erholt sich vom unfairen Tiefschlag und gibt zu, daß Gregor nicht leichthin niederboxt, daß er nicht nur auf einem hohen Roß reitet, sondern auf festem Grund steht. Eunomius hatte in der Tat gesagt und auch gemeint, daß Gott Vater die ausschließliche Ursache allen Gutseins ist.[22]

Der Sarkasmus läuft so ab (§ 44–46): Du, Eunomius, du großer Theologe, dein Hauptargument lautet: Vor der Zeugung ist der Gottesohn nicht-seiend. Du wiederholst dein Argument bis zur Ermüdung und behauptest, diese Logik gelte überhaupt und allgemein. Ja, erwidert Gregor, sie gilt für Käfer, sie gilt für den Frosch, sie gilt für den Hund; denn vor dem Gezeugt-Werden ist der Hund nicht-seiend. Der Gottessohn steht also auf einer Stufe wie Frosch und Hund?

3 Gregors theologische Ausführungen

Gibt es in Tomus IX eine geistige Leistung, die Gregors theologischer Beitrag ist?[23] Es gibt zwei Abschnitte, die von Polemik frei sind,[24] und gegen Schluß fünf Paragraphen[25] in gemäßigtem Ton und bedenkenswerter Gegenüberstellung. Ich habe also drei Punkte.

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21 IX 9 (GNO II 267,1–7): οὐκ ἀγαθὸς ὅστις σε κόνιν ἄψυχον ὄντα θεοειδεῖ κάλλει κατακοσμήσας ἔμψυχον εἰκόνα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεως (vgl. *Gen* 2,7 und 1,26–27); οὐκ ἀγαθὸς ὁ διὰ σὲ μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν (vgl. *Phil* 2,7) καὶ ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς τὰ παθήματα τῆς σῆς ἁμαρτίας ἀναδεξάμενος (vgl. *Hebr* 12,2) καὶ δοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀντάλλαγμα τοῦ σοῦ θανάτου (vgl. *Röm* 5,10; *Gal* 1,4) καὶ ὑπερ ἡμῶν κατάρα (vgl. *Gal* 3,13) καὶ ἁμαρτία (vgl. *II Kor* 5,21) γενόμενος.

22 Siehe IX 1 (GNO II 264,6–10).

23 Dogmatische Topoi in dogmatischer Sprache finden sich in wenigen Stellen: IX 9 (GNO II 267,1–7), vgl. Anm. 21; IX 21 (GNO II 271,18–20): bei Gottvater und Gottsohn wird Eins nicht als eine Zahl gezählt; IX 31 (GNO II 275,24–25) und IX 53 (GNO II 284,5–6): ἡ τοῦ μονογενοῦς ὑπόστασις; IX 37 (GNO II 278,8–12): wie der Gottessohn als „Wort“ (λόγος) ein „Künder“ (ἄγγελος) ist; IX 38 (GNO II 278,25–26): ἡ κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον οἰκονομία; IX 40 (GNO II 279,9–16): biblische Bezeichnungen für den Gottessohn.

24 IX 11–19 und 37–41.

25 IX 56–60.

a *Gregors Exegese von* Matthäus *19,17*

Das Herrenwort *Mt* 19,17:[26] „Niemand ist gut denn der eine Gott" ist auf diese Weise in die Diskussion gekommen. Eunomius hatte in seiner *Apologie* die These verfochten, daß der Gottessohn vor seiner Zeugung „nicht ist" (οὐκ ὤν).

Dagegen wandte Basilius ein: „Der Gottessohn machte die Benennung ausfindig, die ihm zugehört und seiner Ewigkeit angemessen ist, in seiner Mitteilung an seinen eigenen Knecht Mose und nannte sich ‚der Seiende' (*Ex* 3,14)."[27] Eunomius bestreitet diese Auslegung und hakt mit dem Wort „zugehört" ein, was im Griechischen den Übergang von οἰκεῖος zu οἰκειοῦμαι = ‚sich aneignen, sich anmaßen' erlaubt. Eunomius: Der Gottessohn eigne sich mitnichten die Würde von „der Seiende" an, da er doch selber lehre, welche Bezeichnung dem Vater allein zu Recht gebühre; er weise doch dem Seienden und ihm ausschließlich die Bezeichnung „der Gute" zu.

Arius hatte sich auf dieses Herrenwort gestützt; für die Neuarianer war es ein wichtiger Beweis.[28] Gregor sagt, daß polemische Widerlegung nicht ausreiche;

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26 Gregor benutzt *Matthäus* 19,16–22; nur dort ist der Frager als „Jüngling" charakterisiert. Das Herrenwort, wie Gregor es angibt, ist in *Mk* 10,18 und *Lk* 18,19 überliefert, während *Matthäus* einen anderen Text hat; Origenes unterscheidet die Texte, Euseb von Caesarea hat den zweiten Satzteil wie Markus/Lukas, während Johannes Chrysostomus im Text der Predigt den Markus-/Lukastext hat (*In Matthaeum hom.* 63,1). Gregor kann einen falschen Gedankensprung begangen haben. Es ist auch möglich, dass in Gregors Matthäustext der Markus-/Lukastext eingedrungen war, wie es vom sog. Mehrheitstext nach *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27. Auflage) im Apparat dokumentiert ist.

27 *Adv. Eun.* II 18,13–16: Der Eingeborene ὃς οἰκείαν ἑαυτῷ καὶ πρέπουσαν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀϊδιότητι ἐν τῷ πρὸς τὸν ἴδιον θεράποντα Μωσέα χρηματισμῷ προσηγορίαν ἐξεῦρεν, ὄντα ἑαυτὸν ὀνομάσας; Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι, φησίν, ὁ ὤν.

28 In des Arius Schreiben an Alexander, Bischof von Alexandrien, findet sich die ganze Liste der exklusiven Wesensprädikate des einen Gottes (ich füge jeweils den beweisenden Bibelvers hinzu): οἰδαμεν ἕνα θεόν (*I Kor* 8,6; *Eph* 4,6; *Dtn* 6,4; 32,39), μόνον ἀγέννητον, μόνον ἀΐδιον, μόνον ἄναρχον, μόνον ἀληθινόν (*Joh* 17,3), μόνον ἀθανασίαν ἔχοντα (*I Tim* 6,16 μόνον σοφόν (*Röm* 16,27; *I Tim* 1,17), μόνον ἀγαθόν (*Mt* 19,17; *Mk* 10,18; *Lk* 18,19), μόνον δυνάστην (*I Tim* 6,15) . . . (Urkunde 6,2 Opitz = Dok. 1,2 Brennecke). Eine entsprechende Liste findet sich bei Eunomius, *Apologia* 21: Der Schriftbeweis, sagt Eunomius, lautet εἷς ὑπὸ νόμου καὶ προφητῶν καταγγέλλεται θεός. οὗτος καὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς εἶναι θεὸς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ὁμολογεῖται· Πορεύομαι γάρ, φησί, πρὸς τὸν θεόν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν (*Joh* 20,17). μόνος ἀληθινὸς θεός, μόνος σοφός, μόνος ἀγαθός, μόνος δυνατός, μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν.—Origenes hatte einen Unterschied zwischen Gott und dem Heiland in dem Herrenwort: „Niemand ist gut, denn der eine Gott" gefunden, und verwies auf *Sapientia Salomonis* 7,26 (τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ εἰκών), um die einzigartige Nähe des Sohnes zum Vater festzuhalten (*Comm. in Matthaeum* XV 10). Auf arianische Bibelstellen, die die Wesensunterscheidung zwischen Gottvater und dem Sohn Gottes aus Aussagen über die „Einzigkeit des Gottes" beweisen sollen, antwortet Athanasius in *Contra*

Arianos III 7–9. Den Sinn von Bibelaussagen wie *Dtn* 32,39 und *Dtn* 6,4 will er aufklären und argumentiert so (III 7): Alle diese Aussagen haben niemals den Zweck, den Sohn vom Vater abzugrenzen; denn—so die kämpferische Überschrift—es bestehe kein Streit und keine Konkurrenz zwischen Vater und Sohn. Vielmehr gelte *Johannes* 14,9, daß der Vater sich durch den Sohn offenbaren und der Sohn den Vater durch sich offenbaren wolle. „Als der Sohn kam, verherrlichte er den Vater und sagte zu dem Herantretenden: ‚Was heißest du mich gut? Niemand ist gut denn der eine Gott'." Es folgen noch weitere Schriftstellen dieser Art (z.B. *Mt* 22,36 u.a.). Athanasius fasst den Grund solcher Aussagen zusammen: „Dies ist nämlich nicht wegen des Sohnes geschrieben, sondern in der Absicht, die von den Menschen hergestellten falschen Götter aufzuheben …" Übrigens nennt Markell von Ankyra in seiner Streitschrift gegen den Sophisten Asterius dieses Herrenwort nicht. [Ich vermerke, daß Gregor von Nazianz haargenau das Argument des Athanasius reproduziert; *Or.* 30,13].—In der Auseinandersetzung mit den Neuarianern gehört *Matthäus* 19,17; *Mk* 10,18; *Lk* 18,19 zu denjenigen Argumenten, die von den Nicänern gegen die Anhomöer unschädlich gemacht werden mussten. Der älteste Zeuge scheint Hilarius zu sein (*De trinitate* I 29; Antwort in IX 15–18). Hilarius wendet wie alle nach ihm die exegetische Grundregel an: Wer ist im Evangelientext der Frager? Auf welche Frage wird geantwortet? Für Hilarius ist der Frager „ein frecher Jüngling, der durch Einhalten des Gesetzes gerechtfertigt sein will und nicht anerkennt, dass Christus das Ende des Gesetzes ist …" Auf diesen falschen Glauben antwortete der Herr: Er sei kein Lehrer des Gesetzes, insofern nicht gut, sondern als Gott gut.

Nach Hilarius wird auf die Unterscheidung zwischen dem Menschen, als welcher der inkarnierte Gottessohn erscheint, und Gott abgehoben. Eine vollständige Liste der Belegstellen hat R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 389 gesammelt. Ich weiß nicht, ob man jemals einen Erfindert des anti-anhomöischen Arguments wird benennen können; die exegetische Grundregel war schließlich Schultradition. Es ist aber darauf hinzuweisen, daß in schulischer Weise zwei Schriften das Argument haben, die in die heiße Phase der Abrechnung mit den Anhomöern um 360 n.Chr. gesetzt worden sind. Ps. Athanasius, *De incarnatione et contra Arianos* (CPG 2806; siehe cap. 1, PG 26, 985 A–C, und cap. 7, PG 26, 993 AB) wurde von Martin Tetz ("Zur Theologie des Markell von Ankyra", *ZKG* 75 (1964) 217–270) dem Markell zugewiesen, aber die Zuweisung bleibt umstritten. Ps. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* IV (CPG 2837; siehe PG 29, 700C–701A) setzt nach Franz Xaver Risch (*Pseudo-Basilius, Adversus Eunomium IV–V. Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar* [SVigChr 16], Leiden 1992, 13–18) des Eunomius *Apologia* voraus. Die beiden genannten Schriften zeigen ebenso wie der leidlich datierbare Hilarius, dass *Mt* 19,17; *Mk* 10,18; *Lk* 18,19 zu den bedeutenden Schriftbeweisen für die Wesensunterschiedenheit (ἑτεροούσιος, ἀνόμοιος κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν) gehört; fast gleichwertig ist *Johannes* 17,3. Wenn man die Bibelstellenphalanx der Anhomöer, so wie sie um 359/360 n.Chr. verbreitet war, kennt, so versteht man, daß die Nicäner (ὁμοούσιος) dem Reichsbekenntnis von Konstantinopel 360 mit seiner Formel ὅμοιον τῷ γεννήσαντι αὐτὸν πατρὶ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς Arianismus vorwerfen mußten.

Ich füge noch hinzu, dass die Wörter μόνος ἀληθινός nur in dem Glaubensbekenntnis von Nike (359), überliefert bei Theodoret, *HE* II 21,3–7, vorkommen, außerdem im Bekenntnis des Eudoxius (CPG 3405). Dazu kommt das Bekenntnis des Eunomius (Text bei R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 150–159, § 2). Hat Basilius den anhomöischen Einwand aus *Mt* 19,17; *Mk* 10,18; *Lk* 18,19 gekannt? Aus *Adversus Eunomium*

er selber müsse die rechtgläubige Auslegung kurz vorführen. Gregor trägt vier Schichten Pech auf, um sein Resultat wasserdicht zu machen.

Erste Schicht. Gregor fragt: Wer sagt denn zum Herrn „Guter Meister"? Das ist der Jüngling, und der ist reich und meint, in Jesus einen Lehrer gefunden zu haben, der ihm das Rezept für ein ewiges Leben in Lust lehren könne. Ein solcher Playboy sah nur den Menschen Jesus, aber nicht den Gott in Jesus innen drin. Jesus antwortet auf der Ebene, auf der er angesprochen wird: Kein Mensch ist gut—„Niemand ist gut denn der eine Gott".

Zweite Schicht. Gott ist der Jesus Christus, der Eingeborene. Das bezeugen die Propheten und die Evangelisten und die Apostel. Dafür legt Gregor sieben Bibelstellen vor aus Prophetie, Evangelisten und Apostel.

Dritte Schicht. Eunomius hatte betont, daß der Gottessohn der Gott der Schöpfung aber nicht der einzig seiende Gott ist. Also braucht Gregor für das Gottsein des Gottessohnes die Gleichstellung mit Gott Vater. Dazu verweist er auf das Gleichnis von den Arbeitern im Weinberg *Matthäus* 20. Er hebt die Antwort des Weinbergbesitzers heraus: „Habe ich nicht Macht, mit dem Meinen zu tun, was ich will? Siehst du darum so scheel, daß ich gut bin?" (*Mt* 20,15). Gregor folgert: Es ist das Amt des Richters, gerechte Verteilung zu bewirken. Und Richter ist der Gottessohn, wie die Evangelisten bezeugen: „Denn der Vater richtet niemand, sondern alles Gericht hat er dem Sohn gegeben" (*Joh* 5,23).

Vierte Schicht. Aber, so fragt Gregor, steht dem nicht noch im Weg, daß Gott Vater einzig und allein gut sein soll? Nein, denn der Gottessohn spricht zum Vater: „Alles, was mein ist, das ist dein, und was dein ist, das ist mein" (*Joh* 17,10). Folglich auch das Gutsein. „Also ist der Sohn gut," schließt Gregor.[29]

II 29,17–21 ist seine Kenntnis zu erschließen. Seltsam bleibt der Bekenntnistext in *De fide* (CPG 2886; PG 31, 685 A; vgl. Hahn, Bibliothek § 121). Der Anfang lautet: Πιστεύομεν τοίνυν καὶ ὁμολογοῦμεν ἕνα μόνον ἀληθινὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα, τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ θεοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· καὶ ἕνα τὸν μονογενῆ αὐτοῦ υἱὸν κύριον καὶ θεὸν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, μόνον ἀληθινόν, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα. . . . Auffällig ist: „Gott und Vater unseres Herrn"; die Beifügung „und Gottes Jesus Christus" könnte den anhomöischen Einwand aus *Johannes* 20,17 entschärfen wollen. Vgl. die Formel von Sirmium II (357) bei Hilarius, *De synodis* 11, und Athanasius, *De synodis* 28. Basilius: „Den einen allein wahren und guten Gott" gründet sich auf *Joh* 17,3 und das Herrenwort *Mk* 10,18 par. Das „allein wahr" wird entschärft durch seine Wiederholung bei Jesus Christus, begründet in *I Joh* 5,20. Bleibt also „allein gut" bei Gottvater stehen, als ob Basilius das Problem nicht kenne; nirgends zitiert er das fragliche Herrenwort. *De spiritu sancto* VIII 18 linea 46 (ed. Pruche) heißt es: Der Herr führe „zum wahrhaft Guten, zum Vater" (ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν πρὸς τὸν ὄντως ἀγαθόν, τὸν πατέρα, φέρων).

29 IX 19 letzter Satz (GNO II 271,8).

b *Auslegung von* Exodus *3,14*

Eunomius hatte vorgetragen, daß der Nicht-Seiende gezeugt werde, nicht der Seiende.[30] Basilius stellte *Exodus* 3,14 dagegen: „Ich bin der Seiende", gesprochen vom Gottessohn. Basilius meinte, die Gleichsetzung des „Ich" mit Gott beweisen zu sollen. Er verweist auf den Engel, der Mose erschien (*Ex* 3,2) und der den Dialog begann: „Ich bin der Gott deines Vaters Abraham." Dann fragt Basilius: „Wer ist sowohl Engel als auch Gott?"[31] Natürlich unser Herr, der Gottessohn, mit zwei Bibelworten (*Jes* 9,5; *Gen* 31). Eunomius hakte ein: Es spricht doch der Seiende durch einen Engel, welcher Engel auch Gott genannt wird. (Nota bene: ἄγγελος = Engel und = Bote). Deswegen formuliert Eunomius: Wir haben hier „den Engel des Gottes über alles, den Engel des Seienden, und derselbe ist Gott über alles andere".[32]

Die Bibelstelle *Exodus* 3,14 wurde schon von Asterius benutzt: Gott, der Ungezeugte, spreche und sei allein „der Seiende". Markell von Ankyra hatte einen sophistischen Syllogismus dagegen gehalten und behauptet, der Engel sei wie ein Bote aber keine eigene Hypostase. Euseb von Caesarea erwiderte: Es spricht doch der Logos, der Logos ist „seiend" in seiner Abbildhaftigkeit.[33] Wie heilt Gregor die Auslegung, die Eunomius auf einen Stand zwischen Asterius und Euseb zurückgedreht hatte?[34] Gregor scheint die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Euseb und Markell irgendwie zu kennen, verbessert sie aber.[35]

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30 *Apologia* 15: μὴ ὄντα φαμὲν τὸν υἱὸν γεγεννῆσθαι, von Basilius zitiert A*dv. Eun.* II 18,6–7.

31 *Adv. Eun.* II 18,23–26: Der Engel sprach zu Mose:
Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς τοῦ πατρός σου Ἀβραάμ. καὶ μετ' ὀλίγα πάλιν· Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν. τίς οὖν ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ ἄγγελος καὶ θεὸς;

32 IX 27 (GNO II 273,24–274,2) ὃς τῷ μὲν ἄγγελος ὠνομάσθαι σαφῶς ἐδίδαξε δι' ὅτου διήγγειλε τοὺς λόγους τίς ὁ ὤν, τῷ δέ καὶ θεὸς προσειρῆσθαι τὴν ἰδίαν ἔδειξε κατὰ πάντων ὑπεροχήν. ὁ γὰρ τῶν δι' αὐτοῦ γενομένων θεὸς ἄγγελος τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων θεοῦ. Und IX 32 (GNO II 276,4–7): ὁ μὲν ἀποστέλλων Μωϋσέα αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ ὤν, δι' οὗ δὲ ἀπέστελλε καὶ ἐλάλει, τοῦ μὲν ὄντος ἄγγελος, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων ἁπάντων θεός.

33 Zu Asterius und Markell siehe den Text bei Eusebius von Caesarea, *De ecclesiastica theologia* II 19 (Klostermann 123,5–20). Die Antwort Eusebs folgt in II 20 (vgl. besonders Klostermann 129,28–130,2). Der Asteriustext ist Fragment 52 bei M. Vinzent, *Asterius von Kappadokien. Die theologischen Fragmente. Einleitung, kritischer Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, SVigChr 20, Leiden 1993.—Der Markelltext ist Fragment 85 und 86 bei M. Vinzent, *Markell von Ankyra. Die Fragmente, der Brief an Julius von Rom. Hrsg., eingeleitet und übersetzt*, SVigChr 39, Leiden 1997.

34 IX 37–41.

35 Gregor verbessert auch die Belege, die Basilius für die Identität von „Engel" und Gott sammelte. Basilius hatte auf die Prophetie verwiesen (μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος, *Jes* 9,6) und auf die frühere Gleichsetzung von „Engel" und Gott in der Vision Jakobs zu Beth-El (*Gen* 31,11.13; *Gen* 28,13). Gregor präzisiert, dass *Jesaja* 9,6 auf die Menschwerdung

Denn Mose habe bewußt erst „Engel“ geschrieben, den Künder und Ausleger des göttlichen Willens nennend, damit man wisse, der Seiende sei nicht der Vater, sondern der Gottessohn. Und—„seiend“ zeige die Naturverwandtschaft an. Gegen Eunomius ist der Redende nicht „der Engel des Seienden“, sondern selber der Seiende. Gregor neutralisiert also die Bezeichnung „Engel“ und nimmt sie aus der Seinsstufe von Engeln heraus.

Die erste Exegese hält sich innerhalb der damaligen Schulregeln, die zweite Exegese ist heilsgeschichtlich spekulativ und damals nicht ungewöhnlich. Lernen können wir daraus nichts, außer, daß Eunomius als Häretiker ausschied und daß die christliche Theologie durch Gregor davor bewahrt wurde, sich in griechische Philosophie aufzulösen.

c *Das Wesen des Christseins*

Eunomius hatte für Gott Vater eingeführt „Schöpfer“ (κτίστης) und ausdrücklich den Sohn ein „Werk“ Gottes (ποίημα) genannt.[36] Daraufhin empört sich Basilius: Ist noch Christ, wer die geheiligten Namen, auf die wir getauft sind, beiseiteschiebe? Nein, wer „die Kraft des Glaubens und die Gestalt unserer Gottesverehrung“ (τὴν δύναμιν τῆς εὐσεβείας καὶ τὸν οἱονεὶ χαρακτῆρα τῆς λατρείας ἡμῶν) antaste, ist um nichts besser als Juden und Griechen.[37] Darauf stürzt sich Eunomius, polemisiert ziemlich schlimm und kommt zu diesem Bekenntnis: „Wir aber … sagen, daß das Mysterium des rechten Glaubens (τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον) weder durch die Dignität der Namen noch durch besondere Bräuche und mystische Riten definiert wird, sondern durch die Richtigkeit der Lehrsätze.“[38] Gregor sieht darin, was man auf Deutsch nennt: eine Steilvorlage. Wie mit Schadenfreude baut Gregor zwei Seiten lang in fast jeden Satz ein: Eunomius weist ab die göttlichen Namen der Taufformel, die christlichen Lebensformen und die kirchlichen Riten.[39] Trotzdem formuliert Gregor besonnen, was es ist, das Eunomius abweist. Es ist grundlegend Taufe und Eucharistie. Aber Gregor breitet auch umfassend in einer Aufzählung aus: „das Siegel, das Gebet, die Taufe, das Bekenntnis der Sünden, die Freude an den Geboten, die Charakterbildung, das asketische Leben, auf das Gerechte

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bezogen werden müsse, wie ja der Kontext zeige. Ebenso beziehe sich *Psalm* 2,6–7 auf die Menschwerdung. Folglich sei die Bezeichnung „Engel“ (= Künder) überhaupt auf den Menschgewordenen zu beziehen.

36 Vgl. *Apologia* 28,5–6: κτίστης καὶ δημιουργός; 16,4: δημιουργός. *Apologia* 12,3 und 17,14: γέννημα καὶ ποίημα; vgl. *Apologia Apologiae* in Gregor, *CE* III, II 73 (GNO II 76,8–15).

37 *Adv. Eun.* II 22,20–32.

38 Die Polemik in IX 54 (GNO II 284,12–19), das Zitat schließt Gregor an (GNO II 284,20–25).

39 IX 55–60: achtmal.

blicken, nicht von der Begierde erregt werden noch von der Lust besiegt werden noch die Tugend verlassen."[40] Gregor beschreibt das Christsein in seinen Lebensvollzügen. Der Gegensatz ist die richtige Dogmatik in Lehrsätzen.[41] Von den theologischen Lehrsätzen sagt er, dass bei den Nichtchristen über ähnliches gestritten werde, manchmal sogar der Wahrheit Entsprechendes gefunden werde.[42] Aber dann ist er auch wieder vorsichtig. Zwar bekennen die Griechen, wohl die Gebildeten, einen höchsten Gott, jedoch dazu eine Seinshierarchie, bevölkert von göttlichen Untermächten.[43] Die Lebensvollzüge haben die Christen den Heiden voraus; die Lebensvollzüge sind für das Christsein entscheidend. Warum führt Gregor den theologisch-dogmatischen Kampf um die Trinitätslehre? In Tomus IX sagt er: Weil die Taufformel: „auf den Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes" nicht durch Formeln wie „Erschaffer und Schöpfer und Gott des Eingeborenen"[44] zersetzt werden darf—aber das reduziert sich nicht darauf, liturgische Formeln zu wiederholen, sondern erfordert anspruchsvolle Denkarbeit.

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40 IX 58 (GNO II 285,29–286,4).

41 R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 46–47 nennt die Betonung der Genauigkeit (ἀκρίβεια) ein „Leitmotif"; vgl. 178. Aëtius (Syntagmation) und Eunomius, *Apologia* 1–20 führen die Logik in die Auseinandersetzung ein und stellen die Bibelauslegung zurück. Ihnen wird deswegen nicht zu Unrecht „Technologie" vorgeworfen.

42 IX 56 (GNO II 285,12–17).

43 IX 59 (GNO II 286,18–26).

44 IX 61 (GNO II 287,12–17) über Eunomius: φησὶ γὰρ … μὴ εἰς πατέρα τε καὶ υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα τὸ βάπτισμα γίνεσθαι …, ἀλλ'<εἰς τὸν δημιουργὸν καὶ κτίστην καὶ οὐ μόνον πατέρα, φησί, τοῦ μονογενοῦς, ἀλλὰ καὶ θεόν>. Man hat vermutet, daß Gregor mit dem Eunomiuszitat eine bei Eunomianern benutzte Taufformel unterstellen wolle. Ich übersetze deswegen § 61 (GNO II 287,8–17): „Wenn aber jemand meint, sie seien von uns in verleumderischer Weise verklagt worden, soll er seine Schreibereien selber durchsehen und das, was wir zur Prüfung vorgelegt haben, und ersehen, zu welchen Folgen unsere Zitate führen. Das Gesetz des Herrn verwerfend (denn die Überlieferung der göttlichen Mystagogie ist Gesetz) sagt er, dass die Taufe nicht auf Vater und Sohn und Heiligen Geist geschehe, wie der Herr in der Übergabe des Mysteriums den Jüngern befahl (Mt 28,19), sondern <auf Erschaffer und Schöpfer und nicht nur Vater, sagt er, des Eingeborenen, sondern auch sein Gott>." Gregor hat in des Eunomius Text eine Gegenüberstellung zur biblischen Taufformel gelesen; er sagt nicht, daß Eunomius Taufen mit dem Zitat ausführe. Die Gegenüberstellung von biblischer Taufformel mit den Lehrbegriffen, die Eunomius verficht, nahm schon Basilius vor (*Adv. Eun.* II 22,20–32). R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 258 Anm. 355–357 zählt die Zeugnisse auf, die den Arianern—zu Unrecht—eine Taufformel mit den nicht-biblischen Lehrbegriffen unterstellen; diese Zeugnisse sagen nicht, dass mit einer derartigen Formel die Taufe vollzogen wird. Die stärkste Insinuierung bringt Athanasius (*De synodis* 36,3): „Wenn sie solche Gedanken vortragen, leugnen sie irgendwie auch das heilige Bad, weil es auf Vater und Sohn gegeben wird und nicht auf Schöpfer und Geschöpf, wie sie meinen."

Contra Eunomium III 10—Who is Eunomius?[1]

Morwenna Ludlow

This paper will first give an overview of the contents of *CE* III 10, before commenting in more detail on Gregory's characterisation of his opponent, Eunomius. I hope to show that an understanding of this feature in particular helps one to understand the structure and purpose of this concluding part of *CE* III.

I Summary of the Arguments of Book 10

In book 10, Gregory of Nyssa deals with two main arguments or challenges presented by Eunomius: the first (1) concerns the question of whether the Father can truly be called the Son's 'God' (§§ 1–17); the second (2) discusses the various meanings of 'light' as applied to Father and Son in the Bible (§§ 18–49). Gregory responds to the latter by accusing Eunomius of (i) failing to correctly understand Scripture's use of the word 'light' (§§ 18–25); (ii) having a doctrine of the incarnation which implied that the either the Son was evil or the Father was inferior to the Son (§§ 26–44), and (iii) succumbing to precisely that heresy which he accuses the Cappadocians of holding, that is, the idea that God is composite (§§ 46–9).

1 *The Father is "not only the Father of the Only-begotten, but . . . his God".*

As Ekkehard Mühlenberg notes,[2] the only place in *CE* where Gregory not only accuses Eunomius of blasphemy, but also calls him the Antichrist is the close of book 9 (*CE* III 9.64), shortly after Gregory quotes Eunomius' claim that the Father is 'not only the Father of the Only-begotten, but . . . his God' (*CE* III 9,61). Perhaps Gregory took this to be Eunomius' most blunt assertion of the inequality between the Father and the Son. In any case, he picks up the claim in *CE* III 10, announcing that he will discuss the argument Eunomius uses to support it,

1 I am grateful for the comments of the participants of the Leuven colloquium on this paper, particularly the suggestions for improvement made by Michel Barnes, Matthieu Cassin and Stuart G. Hall.

2 See E. Mühlenberg, "Gregor von Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* III, Tomus IX", 430, 434.

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an argument which Gregory calls the 'chief point (τὸ κεφάλαιον) in support of their doctrine' (*CE* III 10,1).

What was this argument? It appears that Eunomius quoted John 10:17 ("Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'.") in order to claim that "either the disciples are of one essence with the Father" (which is clearly ludicrous) "or the Son is not of the same essence with the Father but serves his "God" in the same sense as the disciples do".[3] In *CE* III 10,1–17 Gregory discusses the interpretation of this (and related) verses; his exegesis is framed by his contrast of Eunomius' blasphemous and futile theology with what Gregory claims to be the "truly religious" and traditional interpretation of the verse (§§ 1 and 17).[4] This pious and traditional approach consists in interpreting the phrases 'my father and your father' and 'my God and your God' in the light of the divine οἰκονομία.[5] Consequently, Gregory gives his reader a potted summary of the history of salvation from creation and the Fall (§ 10), to the incarnation and Christ's saving work (§ 11–12) and finally the resurrection after which Jesus proclaims the glad news of the divine economy to Mary (§ 13–14). Whereas Eunomius applied Christ's words "my God and your God" to his non-human nature and thus allegedly intended 'to demolish the glory of the Only-Begotten',[6] Gregory's exegesis applies them to Christ's *human* nature (§§ 9 and 17).

This pattern of interpreting descriptions of Christ according to the economy of salvation fits with Gregory's strategy throughout *CE* III, as other contributors to this volume have noted.[7] But Gregory implies that this is no mere

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3 Gregory quotes Eunomius' argument at *CE* III 1,8, but the passage is wordy and not very easy to understand out of context (possibly this is one of Gregory's reasons for quoting it). Here I use the paraphrase by R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius, The Extant Works,* Oxford 1987, 126; see also n.56.

4 *CE* III 10,1: τῇ βλασφημίᾳ. *CE* III 10,2: τὴν . . . εὐσεβῆ . . . διάνοιαν which is πρόδηλον . . . τοῖς παραδεξαμένοις ἐν ἀληθείᾳ τὴν πίστιν. *CE* III 10, 17: every pious person (πάντα . . . τὸν εὐσεβοῦντα) will agree that compared to Gregory's interpretation Eunomius' is completely futile (πάντως ἀργεῖν).

5 He describes his interpretation as containing "the purpose of the human economy" (i.e. of Jesus Christ): κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον οἰκονομίας τὸν σκοπὸν (*CE* III 10,17).

6 *CE* III 10,17: ἐπὶ καθαιρέσει τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς δόξης. Cf. *CE* III 10,1, where Gregory refers to his opponents as 'those who reduce the majestic glory of the Only-begotten to mean and servile ideas' (οἱ τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς δόξης εἰς ταπεινὰς καὶ δουλοπρεπεῖς ὑπολήψεις κατάγοντες).

7 Compare, for example, Volker Drecoll's comments on Gregory's interpretation according to the economy in *CE* III 1, 131–8 and *CE* III 1,41–56 (especially references to the divine economy in §§ 46 and 48); see pp. 260–263.

grammatical point. Christ, in becoming human, became the first-fruits of a salvation which will apply to all; not only was the incarnation itself part of God's economy of salvation, but the particular way in which it was announced had a purpose too: "*when we hear* that the true God and Father has become Father and God of our First-fruits, we no longer doubt that the same one has become our Father and God too, *when we learn* that we shall enter the same place, where Christ has entered for our sake as forerunner" (§ 15, my emphasis). According to Gregory, even the announcement of this to a woman was appropriate to God's economic scheme (§ 16). The stress that Gregory puts on the fittingness of the particular words Christ spoke and the appropriateness of his particular addressee suggests a relation in Gregory's mind between the general divine economy of salvation and the particular economy of Christ's teaching. This connection might reflect the use of the term οἰκονομία in rhetoric. "At the core of οἰκονομία is the notion of accommodation to circumstance, whether in the daily management of an estate . . . or in God's providential concern for his creatures as seen in the Incarnation". From this core meaning came the application of the term οἰκονομία to the accommodation of words to a specific purpose, context and audience.[8] For Gregory, therefore, the effectiveness of Jesus' discourse stands for the effectiveness of his whole role in the divine economy.

A second, less obvious, but no less significant result of Gregory's exegesis of John 10:17 is that it implicitly distinguishes different senses of the word 'son': Son of God, Only-Begotten of the Father; humans as sons of God by virtue of their creation by God; that sonship rejected in favour of becoming adoptive sons of the devil; humans newly-adopted by God as his sons.[9] The one who was truly Son of God, and thus God too, took on himself that sonship which all humans once had but lost and restored it back to them. It is *that* sense of shared human sonship under God that Jesus Christ evokes when he refers to his 'God' and 'Father'. Again, this technique of distinguishing several different

8 G. L. Kustas, "Saint Basil and the Rhetorical Tradition", in: P. J. Fedwick (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, Toronto 1981, 223–228; quotation from 227–228. cf. M. Heath, *Menander. A Rhetor in Context*, Oxford 2004, 17.

9 See § 10 on the Fall which uses the language of adoption (by the devil) and disinheritance: humanity was given in adoption [εἰσεποιήθη] . . . into an evil kinship with the father of sin', so that 'he who was disinherited [ἀποκηρυκθέντος] through his own wickedness no longer had the Good and the True as his Father and God' and § 13 humankind 'is no longer disinherited [ἐν ἀποκηρύκτοις] or cast out of the Kingdom of God, but is again a son . . .'. Translations adapted slightly from that of S. G. Hall: for the specific meaning of the Greek words, see Liddle and Scott pp. 497 and 202.

meanings of a word (often according to his understanding of the divine economy) is typical of Gregory.[10]

2 *"As much as the Begotten is separate from the Unbegotten, so is the Light distinguished from the Light"*

That Eunomius himself used a similar technique is evident from Gregory's second challenge in which he discusses Eunomius' distinction of different kinds of light (§§ 18–25). Gregory first quotes Eunomius' words: "as much as the Begotten is separate from the Unbegotten, so is the Light distinguished from the Light" (§ 18). This is a passage from Eunomius' *Apology*, which had already been addressed in Basil of Caesarea's *Against Eunomius*.[11] Eunomius seems to have adopted the idea of a sliding scale of divinity in which the Begotten is less than the Unbegotten and the Light of the Son is consequently less than that of the Father. In reply, Basil used a *reductio ad absurdum*: logically, he argued, Begotten is the *opposite* of Unbegotten; so if Eunomius were to be consistent, then the Light of the Son would be *opposed* to the Light of the Father—in other words it would not be light at all, but darkness.[12]

We know that Eunomius reported Basil's *reductio ad absurdum* in his *Apology for the Apology*, for Gregory quotes it right at the end of *CE* III:

> "Yes", [Eunomius] says, "but if, since 'begotten' is the opposite of 'unbegotten', the begotten Light meets the unbegotten Light on equal terms, the one will be light, the other darkness."[13]

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10 See, in this volume, Volker Drecoll on *CE* III 1 (see footnote 6 above) and M. Ludlow, "In illud: tunc et ipse filius", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism, Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008*), SVigChr 106, Leiden, Boston 2011, 413–425.

11 See Eunomius, *Apology* 19,12–14 (Vaggione 58) and Basil, *Against Eunomius* II, PG 29, 629C–633A.

12 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* III 10,18; see Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* II (PG 29, 632B14–25: Κατὰ δὴ οὖν τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον πρὸν τὸ γεννητὸν τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ τῆς ἀντιθέσεως οὔσης, ὁ τὸν Πατέρα φῶς ὀνομάζων, φῶς δὲ καὶ τὸν Υἱόν, τοσοῦτον δὲ τοῦτο τὸ φῶς ἐκείνου τοῦ φωτὸς διωρίσθαι λέγων, ὅσον τὸ γεννητὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀγεννήτου διώρισται, οὐχὶ δῆλός ἐστι, κἂν τῷ ῥήματι προσποιῆται φιλανθρωπεύεσθαι, φῶς ὀνομάζων δῆθεν καὶ τὸν Υἱόν, ἀλλὰ τῇ γε δυνάμει τῶν λεγομένων πρὸς τὸ ἐναντίον ἀπάγων τὴν ἔννοιαν; Σκοπεῖτε γὰρ τί ἀντίκειται τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ, ἄλλο ἀγέννητον, ἢ τὸ γεννητόν; Τὸ γεννητὸν δηλονότι. Τί δὲ ἀντίκειται τῷ φωτί; φῶς ἕτερον, ἢ τὸ σκότος; Τὸ σκότος πάντως).

13 *CE* III 10,51: ναί, γησίν, ἀλλ' εἰ τοῦ γεννητοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον ἐναντίως ἔχοντος κατ' ἴσον ὑποβαίνοι τὸ γεννητὸν φῶς πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον φῶς, τὸ μὲν γενήσεται φῶς, τὸ δὲ σκότος.

At that point, Gregory merely laughs at Eunomius. He seemingly praises him for his 'sharpness and accuracy',[14] but immediately undercuts that by pointing out that this quotation is in fact a paraphrase of Basil's own words.[15] Eunomius can only be logical, Gregory implies, when he is citing someone else.

We will return later to the rhetorical effect of that tactic. Here we focus on *CE* III 10,18–25, where Gregory describes how Eunomius actually responded to the challenge posed by Basil's *reductio ad absurdum*. Apparently, in his subsequent *Apology for the Apology*, Eunomius tried to avoid the absurd conclusion set out by Basil by asserting that there are different senses of the word 'light' in the Bible: Gregory quotes him as distinguishing the 'true light' (Christ, *John* 1,9); the light created in the beginning (*Gen* 1,3); the disciples who are the 'light of the world' (*Matt* 5,14); and the 'unapproachable light' (the Father, *1 Tim* 6,16: § 19). With this focus on several kind of light, Eunomius seems to have tried to avoid the dilemma that Basil constantly tried to force on him (either the Son is truly light, or not at all; either the Son is fully divine, or not at all). Rather, Eunomius claims that the Son is light *to the extent that* he 'illuminate[s] people' so that they can know the transcendent light.[16]

i Operations

One way of attacking Eunomius here would be to remind him of an argument he used in relation to the words *genetos* and *agennetos*: that is, that things with different names must be different things.[17] If the converse were true (the same name indicates same things), then 'light' would identify some identical property shared by both Father and Son. In fact, Gregory returns to this kind of argument later (§ 46). Here, however, such an argument would be weak, because clearly both Gregory and Eunomius in fact *agree* that there is a fundamental difference between created and uncreated light. Consequently, Gregory focuses on the idea (also espoused by Eunomius) that things with the same *operation* must be the same; things with different operations are different.[18] Gregory asserts that Eunomius implicitly distinguishes created light from

14 *CE* III 10,51: τὸ μὲν οὖν ὀξὺ καὶ εὔστοχον.

15 *CE* III 10,51.

16 See Eunomius quoted at *CE* III 8,5 and *Apology for the Apology* (Vaggione 123). Eunomius anticipated the problem that the Bible refers to both Father and Son as light in his *Apology* (§ 19): there, however, he simply claimed that one was begotten and the other unbegotten light.

17 See e.g. Eunomius, *Apology* § 18; also quoted in Basil *Adversus Eunomium* II 24 (PG29, 629a1–3: Ὅτι ἐχρῆν, εἴπερ αὐτοῖς ἦν τῆς ἀληθείας φροντὶς, παρηλλαγμένων τῶν ὀνομάτων, παρηλλαγμένας ὁμολογεῖν καὶ τὰς οὐσίας).

18 See Eunomius, *Apology* 20 (Vaggione 58–60).

the disciples' light by their means of operation (κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἐνεργείας τρόπον, § 21): the former is material and the latter intellectual. He then challenges his opponent to distinguish the light of the Father and the Son by their operations (Gregory, of course, thinks that this is impossible: § 21). Next, however, he develops his own variation of Basil's *reductio ad absurdum*, challenging Eunomius to explain how, if Begotten is the opposite of Unbegotten, 'true' (light) can be opposed to 'unapproachable' (light). 'True' is not the opposite of 'unapproachable', unless 'unapproachable' means 'unapproachable by the truth', i.e. false—which would deny everything that Eunomius claims about the Father. According, to Eunomius' concept of God, the Father must be 'unapproachable by falsehood', in which case the Father is 'true'. Thus 'true' and 'unapproachable' in fact mean the same thing and indicate the same quality in the Father and the Son (§§ 22–4).

ii The Incarnation and Divine Power

Next, Gregory reports Eunomius' claim about John's prologue: if the 'light' of verses 4–5 was the Word that became flesh, how could that light be the same light as the light of the Father, given that the incarnate "lived by human laws, or was crucified"? (§§ 26–9, quoting Eunomius' words in § 29). Gregory's reply is to accuse Eunomius of thinking that the incarnation itself was an absurdity and he presents his opponent with a dilemma. If, as Eunomius apparently claims, it was in the nature of the Son but not of the Father to become incarnate, then either the Father was powerless to become incarnate (which destroys Eunomius' claims about the superiority of the Father); or the Son shares the weaknesses, even the evils, of the world in which he became incarnate (§§ 30–4). Gregory plays with Eunomius' argument that the Son 'acted' (ἐνήργησεν), while the Father was 'inactive' (ἀνενέγητον) with regard to this operation (ἐνεργεία—i.e. the incarnation), twisting and stretching Eunomius' vocabulary to imply that the Father's lack of involvement in one particular operation makes him generally powerless (see the quotation of Eunomius' words at § 36). After a brief attack on the inconsistency of Eunomius' use of the word 'true' (§ 34–5),[19] Gregory plays variations on the theme of this argument in §§ 36–8 and again in §§ 42–2, in both cases implying that if the Son, but not the Father, could become incarnate then the Son is to be ranked higher or praised more than the Father. These variations are separated by interludes, which will be discussed later in this paper.

19 Gregory argues that while the phrase 'true light' for Eunomius signifies a lesser light than the 'unapproachable light', the phrase 'true God' indicates the very highest rank of divinity.

iii Is God Composite?

Finally, Gregory deals with Eunomius' claim that if God is a Trinity in the sense that the Cappadocians hold, then their God is composite (§§ 46–9).[20] Gregory quotes Eunomius attack on Basil from *Apology for the Apology*:

> [Basil] also makes God composite for us, by suggesting that the Light is common, but that [the Father and the Son] are distinct one from another by certain characteristics and various differences, for what coincides in one shared aspect, but is distinguished by certain differences and sets of characteristics, is no less composite.[21]

Gregory, somewhat tendentiously, takes Eunomius to have conceded, for the sake of argument, that 'light' indicated something in common to Father and Son. Eunomius argues: *if* that were so and *if* the light of the Father and the Son were differentiated by the terms 'true' and 'unapproachable', then Basil's God would be composite. That is, Basil's God would be a composite of that which is held in common (κοινότης) and the distinguishing particularities (τὰ ἰδιωμάτα).

Gregory seizes on Eunomius' alleged 'concession' that light might refer to something in common. He claims that since Eunomius 'stipulates in many places' that 'names are attached to realities', then Eunomius is at last admitting that light refers to some 'underlying reality' (τινος ὑποκειμένου) in common to both Father and Son (§ 47). Put more forcefully: if things have the same name, they have the same nature (φύσις): there is identity (ταὐτότης) between the two (§ 47). Gregory next argues that commonality (κοινότης) and individuality (ἰδιότης) do not come together to form a composite. Rather, the essence (οὐσία) of a thing remains what it is, and its commonality (κοινότης) and individuality (ἰδιότης) vis-à-vis other things are attributes (things which are "perceived and understood to apply to them"); they are not things in themselves (§ 48). An illustration of this is the way in which Scripture says that God and humans are good, but distinguishes their goodness by the use of qualifiers: there is, therefore, something in common (ἔστι τι κοινὸν) to both God and humans (goodness), but they relate to goodness in different ways (God is its fount; humans merely participate in it) and their possession of goodness in common is not to

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20 In the *Apology*, the accusation of a composite divinity arises in the context of Eunomius justifying why 'light' and 'light' do not refer to the same underlying essence in Father and Son. 'Light' must mean the same thing as 'unbegotten' in the case of the former, or else the Unbegotten would be composite; as 'light' cannot mean 'unbegotten' when referred to the Son, it must mean 'begotten' (Eunomius *Apology* 19 [Vaggione 57]).

21 *CE* III 10,46.

be confused with the possession of a common essence (that is to say, κοινότης between two things does not amount to their being ὁμοουσίος). Furthermore, Gregory states, one cannot conclude that God is composite from that facts that he is both God and good.

II Ēthos and Pathos

None of these arguments in fact add very much of substance to what Gregory has already argued in *CE* III—or, indeed, to what Basil argued in his *Adversus Eunomium*. What, then, can we learn from *CE* III 10? This paper will suggest that it is a fascinating example of Gregory's rhetorical approach to theology. Certain aspects which seem somewhat puzzling from a theological and historical point-of-view can be illuminated by a deeper understanding of his literary style.[22] Besides asserting that Eunomius' theology is wrong, Gregory is also clearly conveying the idea that it is *dangerously* wrong. For example, he follows a long heresiological tradition by associating Eunomius with the kind of language and imagery standardly used by the fathers for demons—thus giving the impression that Eunomius is responsible for, or is an agent of, a kind of demonic deception. But, as scholars of heresiology have pointed out, the association of one's opponent with the demonic is as much a rhetorical strategy as a theological claim.[23] Throughout *CE* III, but particularly in book 1, the climax of book 9, and book 10, Gregory seeks to alienate Eunomius from Gregory's audience and to encourage waverers to side with himself. The most obvious tactic he employs is consistently to label Eunomius' views as 'heretical' or 'blasphemous'.[24] Sometimes this kind of appellation is pointedly contrasted with the 'piety' of the pro-Nicene party or Eunomius' words are contrasted with

22 In my analysis of Gregory's literary style I am indebted to Matthieu Cassin, both in conversation and from his published work: see Matthieu Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique à la fin du IV^e siècle: Grégoire de Nysse, Contre Eunome III,* Thèse de doctorat; Université Paris IV—Sorbonne, Paris 2009; *id.*, "'Plumer Isocrate': usage polémique du vocabulaire comique chez Grégoire de Nysse", *REG* 121 (2008), 783–96 and *id.*, "Text and Context: The Importance of Scholarly Reading. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*", in: M. Ludlow – S. Douglass (eds.), *Reading the Church Fathers,* London 2011.

23 In a wide literature, see e.g. R. Lyman, "2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy", *JECS* 11 (2003) 209–222, especially 218, emphasising the *complexity* of such a strategy in its cultural context: 'The demonized and apocalyptic opposition is between truth and falsity, not Christianity and culture or "Hellenism" and "Judaism."'

24 Blasphemy: e.g. *CE* III 10,1, 8; 37; heresy *CE* III 10,36; 37; 47.

the words of 'the Apostle'.[25] But there is more to this than simple name-calling. It was an assumption of classical and later rhetoric that the speaker would seek to convey to his audience, either directly or indirectly, the untrustworthiness or bad will (κακόνοια) of his opponent, whilst affirming his own character as honest and good (establishing his ἦθος) in order to secure the good will (εὔνοια) of the audience.[26] Because disposing the audience well towards oneself as speaker [ἦθος] was understood as being closely connected to disposing them against one's opponent by stirring up emotion [πάθος] against him, ἦθος and πάθος are often discussed together in guides to rhetoric.[27] In what follows I shall explain how Gregory seeks to alienate Eunomius from his audience, first by following the heresiological tradition of associating his opponent with the demonic, secondly by suggesting that Eunomius is a bad philosopher (specifically, a bad logician) and thirdly by alleging that he has bad literary style.

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25 See e.g. *CE* III 10,1–2: Eunomius' "blasphemy" contrasted with the "truly religious understanding of these words"; *CE* III 10,8: 'the argument of the blasphemy' contrasted with 'the proclamation of the Apostle' (cf. *CE* III 5, where the method of Eunomius and his followers is contrasted with that of "the Apostle").

26 On the focus on ἦθος as a mode of persuasion see e.g. Aristotle *Ars rhetorica* I 2.3–4 (1356a): "Of the πίστεις [forms of persuasion] provided through speech there are three species: for some are in the character [ἦθος] of the speaker, and some are disposing the listener in some way, and some in the argument [λόγος] itself. . . . [There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly. . .'" The ἦθος required to make an orator trustworthy consists of practical wisdom [φρόνησις], virtue [ἀρετή] and good will [εὔνοια] (*ibid.* II.1,5). This article will focus on Gregory's use of *ēthos* and πάθος, but it seems that Eunomius may well have pursued a similar tactic: while I accept Vaggione's theological interpretation of Eunomius' use of the terms εὔνοια and κακόνοια, it seems to be me possible that they may have had a rhetorical application too: R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford, New York 2000, 87–88.

27 See *ibid.* II 1–11 and Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* VI 2 (especially VI 2,13 and 18–19: "the excellence of [the orator's] own character will make his pleading all the more convincing") and Cicero, *De oratore* II: winning favour of audience §§ 178–84; inducing emotions in audience: §§ 185–216 (see esp. § 178: "nothing in oratory is more important than to win for the orator the favour of his hearer and to have the latter so affected as to be swayed by something resembling a mental impulse or emotion, rather than by judgment or deliberation"). See also E. Gunderson, "The rhetoric of rhetorical theory", in: E. Gunderson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric,* Cambridge 2009, 109–125, here 121: '"Ethos" matters. And a complex interrelationship between morals and passions lies at the heart of the issue of moving one's audience'. On *ēthos* in *CE* III, see Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, e.g. 268.

1 *Eunomius and the Demonic*

Perhaps the most obvious of Gregory's strategies is the association of Eunomius with the demonic. References to the demonic and to idolatry (which was closely associated with the demonic) are absent in *CE* I, are sparing in *CE* II, but are found scattered throughout *CE* III.[28] Rebecca Lyman suggests that Gregory "approached heresy as a matter of sickness or poor education rather than [demonic] pollution" (in contrast to, for example, Athanasius and Gregory's own brother Peter).[29] She is right to stress both the rhetorical manner in which Gregory uses various categories to characterise his opponent and his use of slurs about Eunomius' health and training for this purpose. However, I would argue that the traditional Christian association of heresy with the demonic remains and that demonic language remains as part of the 'rhetorical creation' of Eunomius as an Arian heretic, regardless of whether Gregory actually believes Eunomius' errors are *caused* by demonic pollution.[30] Indeed, as we shall see, in Gregory's polemic the accusations about Eunomius' training and demonic beliefs are mutually supporting.

Firstly, Eunomius is associated with pagan religious practice, particularly idolatry. Gregory here follows a long-established Christian tradition which argued that phenomena associated with pagan religious practices such as divination were due to the evil and deceptive workings of demons.[31] Even though

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28 A search by means of the the TLG on-line for the root δαιμ-reveals the following: *CE* I: no hits; *CE* II: 2 hits; *CE* III: 8 hits. A search for the root εἰδωλ- revaled: *CE* I: no hits; *CE* II: 7 hits; *CE* III: 19 hits.

29 R. Lyman, "A topography of heresy: mapping the rhetorical creation of Arianism", in: M. R. Barnes – D. H. Williams (eds.), *Arianism after Arius. Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts,* Edinburgh 1993, 45–62, here 59. Lyman's analysis comes in the course of a wider survey of the 'rhetorical creation' of later Arianism and is of necessity very brief; she also focusses almost entirely on *CE* I, which may explain the absence of references to the demonic.

30 In fact I think that the dichotomy implied by this sentence is a false one (demonic heresy as a rhetorical construction vs heresy 'really' caused by demons); see my "Demons, Evil, and Liminality in Cappadocian Theology", *JECS* 20, 2012, 179–211.

31 See, e.g. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra fatum* [*Fat.*] (GNO 3.2 59,15). For the earlier tradition, see e.g. Justin Martyr e.g. *2 Apologia* 5.4 (see A. Y. Reed, "The trickery of the fallen angels and the demonic mimesis of the divine: aetiology, demonology, and polemics in the writings of Justin Martyr", *JECS* 12 (2004) 141–171, passim, especially 144); Origen e.g. *Contra Celsum* 3.2; 3.25; 5.46; 7.65, as cited by D. B. Martin, *Inventing superstition: from the Hippocratics to the Christians*, Cambridge (MA), London 2004, 178. See also J. Ries, "Cultes païens et démons dans l'apologétique chrétienne de Justin à Augustin", in: J. Ries (ed.), *Anges et démons. Actes du colloque de Liège et de Louvain-la-Neuve 25–26 novembre 1987,* Homo religiosus 14, Louvain-la-Neuve 1989, 337–352, here 339–341.

prayers addressed to gods appeared to be answered, they were answered by demons who did not have the petitioners' good in mind.[32] By Gregory of Nyssa's day, the accusation of idolatry seems to be particularly aimed at those educated people who practised theurgy: devotees think that they can move gods to do what they want, but they have in fact become enslaved to demons.[33] A clear theme running through this kind of accusation is that of deception (a word commonly associated with the demons is ἡ ἀπάτη): demons deceive people into thinking that idols were gods, that gods answer prayers, that divination works.[34]

This theme is given a very particular spin in *CE* III 10: a few paragraphs before directly accusing Eunomius of deceit (the word ἀπάτη or its plural is repeated three times in three lines in § 20), Gregory recounts the story of the fall—for Christians the archetypal story of deceit (§§ 10–15). Strikingly, Gregory's commentary on the narrative (§ 16) contrasts Satan's *words* to Eve with those of Christ to Mary:

> just as, having become at the start minister and advocate of the serpent's words (τῶν τοῦ ὄφεως λόγων . . . διάκονός τε καὶ σύμβουλος), she consequently brought a beginning of evil upon the world, so, by bearing to the disciples the words of him who had slain the rebellious dragon (τοῦ θανατώσαντος τὸν ἀποστάτην δράκοντα τοὺς λόγους τοῖς μαθηταῖς διακομίσασα), she might become a pioneer of faith for mankind . . .[35]

Thus Gregory firmly establishes a contrast not only between devilish deceit and Christian truth, but between the *mode* of the deception/salvation: words. This continues a theme Gregory had established at the end of *CE* III 9, where again Eunomius' deceit is described in very verbal terms:

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32 See, for example, the story related in Gregory of Nyssa's *Thaum*: responding to a crowd which prays for more space in the theatre the local demon causes a plague PG 46, 956,22–48; tr. Maraval § 87–88, http://www.gregoiredenysse.com/?page_id=86, accessed 10.3.2011.

33 See, perhaps most famously, Gregory of Nazianzus' account of Julian's supposed enslavement to demons in Or. 4 he is deluded by them (77,20); they make him unstable (85,4) and inconsistent (101,6) and ultimately—unsated by the animal sacrifices he offers them—they demand to be fed with Julian's own blood (87,14–19).

34 See e.g. Basil, *Epistula* 233:15: the mind deceived by a demon "even thinks that wood is not wood but god" (see also the reference to deceptions—τοῖς ἀπατῶσιν—in line 13); Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. cat.* XVIII (esp. line 8: ἡ τῶν δαιμόνων ἀπάτη); Gregory of Nyssa, *Fat.* repeats the phrase the "deceptive power of the demons" twice in 10 lines (GNO 3.2 59,14: ἡ ἀπατηλὴ τῶν δαιμόνων δύναμις) (GNO 3.2 59,24: τὴν ἀπατηλὴν τῶν διαμόνων ἐνέργειαν).

35 *CE* III 10 16,8–12.

> 63. Do you see and understand, you who are dragged off by deceit to destruction (δι' ἀπάτης), who it is you have set over your souls as instructor?—he debases the holy scriptures (τὰς ἁγίας γραφάς), he changes the divine words (τὰς θείας φωνάς) . . . he not only barbs his own tongue (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶσσαν) against us, but also tries to make alterations in the holy words themselves (τὰς ἁγίας φωνάς). . . . Do you not yet perceive that he lifts himself up against the name we adore (τῷ ὀνόματι), so that in time the name (τὸ ὄνομα) of the Lord will not be heard, but there will be brought into the churches, instead of Christ, Eunomius? 64. Do you not yet consider that this godless proclamation (τὸ ἄθεον τοῦτο . . . κήρυγμα) has been published in advance by the Devil as a contemplation, preparation, preface (προοίμιον), for the coming of the Antichrist? One who strives to prove that his own words (τὰς ἰδίας φωνὰς) are more authoritative than the sayings of Christ (τῶν . . . λόγων) and to alter the faith away from the divine names (τῶν θείων ὀνομάτων) and the sacramental ceremonies and symbols towards his own deceit (εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν ἀπάτην), what else will he be rightly called, if not Antichrist?

Gregory develops other variations on this theme of verbal deception, including using the imagery of the theatre and masks: hence in *CE* III 9,1–2 he ironically commends Eunomius for having finally 'removed every mask of disguise from the lie'[36] and at the end of the work he chides Eunomius for being like an actor, not speaking in his own voice but Basil's (and not doing that very well): "I would like to ask him who acts our part (τὸν τῶν ἡμετέρων ὑποκριτὴν) either to use our words, or to present his imitation (τὴν μίμησιν) of our speech as closely as possible, or else as he has learnt and is able, to use his book to argue for himself (ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου προσώπου) and not for us".[37]

Secondly, Eunomius' theology is demonic in that, according to Gregory, it mixes the divine and human—just like the Egyptian idolaters (§§ 40–2). Here Gregory moves beyond the common ploy of associating a heretic with idolatry (and foreign idolatry at that): his focus is not so much on "their outlandish idol-making, when they attach certain animal forms to human bodies", but on what those idols symbolise (§ 41). In other words, it perhaps reflects not Egyptian religion as such, but various Greek philosophical attempts to understand it.[38] Gregory suggests that Eunomius' Christology, according

36 *CE* III 9,2 ἐπεὶ δὲ παντὸς ἀπατηλοῦ προσωπείου τὸ ψεῦδος ἀπογυμνώσας.

37 *CE* III 10,51 (a play on προσώπον—person, character, mask—surely being intended here).

38 Plutarch, for example, uses allegory to understand both images of and myths about the Egyptian gods: Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* § 75; see also F. Graf, "Plutarch und die

to which Christ is "ambiguous in nature (ἐπαμφοτερίζειν κατὰ τὴν φύσιν)" and has its "being combined and commingled with opposites (τινα σθμμιγῆ τε καὶ σύγκρατον ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων τὴν οὐσίαν)" recalls the explanation given for the Egyptians' composite idols: they symbolise "their mixed nature (τῆς συμμίκτου φύσεως), which they call a *daemon*" which "does not have divinity unmixed or undiluted (οὐκ ἀμιγὲς οὐδὲ ἄκρατον)".[39] Like Eunomius' Begotten one, who 'both yearns for participation in the Good and is diverted towards a disposition subject to passion', the *daemon* surpasses human nature, but is susceptible to pleasure and pain.[40]

Again, however, Gregory seems to attempt a typically verbal construal of the situation. Eunomius clearly does not worship idols—but Gregory alleges that he is as bad as those who do. He is someone who holds the symbolic interpretations of Anubis, Isis or Osiris, 'while avoiding the names' (τῶν δὲ ὀνομάτων φειδόμενος).[41] At one level, this is just accusing a heretic of holding, but not admitting to, views which are tantamount to paganism (specifically, the idea of a cosmic intermediary). More profoundly, it may be that Gregory is referring to contemporary philosophical debates about the status of the Egyptian gods: were they different gods from the Greek pantheon or the same gods worshipped under different titles? Tied up with that debate was the issue of the particular status of divine names: it was difficult for many Platonists to argue that the Egyptian gods were the same gods with different names, for their philosophy of language committed them to the idea that names "belonged naturally to their referents".[42] This debate is of course familiar from Basil and Gregory's arguments with Eunomius—so in suggesting that Eunomius in effect worships Egyptian gods but under the name of 'the Begotten', Gregory is not only accusing his opponent of paganism and idolatry, he is also accusing him of being inconsistent in his view that particular names denoted particular things or beings.

Götterbilder", in: R. Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbider,* RVV 54, Berlin 2005, 251–266, especially 261. On Porphyry and Iamblichus disagreeing on the question of cult statues see, M. J. Edwards, *Culture and Philosophy in the Age of Plotinus*, London 2007, 137.

39 Quotations *CE* III 10 40,5; 7–8 and 10 41,3; 6; see also line 7.

40 *CE* III 10 40,8–9; 10 41,8: ἡδονήν τε καὶ πόνον ἀναδεχόμενον.

41 *CE* III 10 41,15–16.

42 Edwards, *Culture and Philosophy*, 142, citing Iamblichus *On the Egyptian Mysteries* 7,4 (see E. C. Clarke – J. M. Dillon – J. P. Hershbell (tr.), *Iamblichus, On the Mysteries,* Atlanta 2003, 298–303).

2 *Logic and Rhetoric*

So, Gregory implies that Eunomius is demonic because he deceives and because he is secretly idolatrous. Furthermore, he gives both accusations a 'spin' which focuses on Eunomius' use of language: either Eunomius uses it as a technique to deceive or he is inconsistent in his use of it. It is at this point that claims about demonic thought overlap with those about Eunomius' training. In particular, Gregory draws attention to Eunomius' claim to precision in theological language (ἀκρίβεια)—a claim which seems to be grounded in Eunomius' own self-presentation, but which Gregory characterises as both obsessive and specious.[43] Gregory himself uses the term ἀκρίβεια fairly frequently in *CE* III, sometimes he undermines Eunomius' claim to theological precision, by saying that it is empty or childish; often he implies that it is something he and not Eunomius has.[44] Most pointedly, he claims that Isaiah had ἀκρίβεια and that only those inspired by the Holy Spirit can interpret Scripture ἀκριβῶς (clearly implying that Eunomius is uninspired).[45]

Gregory connects Eunomius' claim to 'precision' with his alleged tendency to use 'logic' or 'syllogisms' or to be 'technical'.[46] In turn, these latter accusations are treated by Gregory as evidence of Eunomius' 'Aristotelianism'.[47] Here Gregory describes Eunomius' use of Aristotle, not as cool rational logic, but as 'nonsense' (λῆρον, line 2): "he laboriously makes a lot of noise about the Aristotelian classification of beings, and in what we have written elaborates on the kinds and species and distinctions and indivisibles, and deploys all the rest of the technical logic (τὴν τεχνολογίαν) of the *Categories* to attack our doctrines".[48] Fourth century opponents drew attention to the role of Aristotle

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43 At *CE* III 9,54 Gregory quotes Eunomius as claiming that "We ourselves, relying on the saints and blessed men, say that the 'mystery of godliness' (1 *Tim* 3,16) is not constituted either by the solemnity of the names or by peculiarities of ceremonies and sacramental symbols, but by correctness of doctrines (τῶν δογμάτων ἀκριβείᾳ)". On the role of Eunomius' claim to ἀκρίβεια in theological language, see Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 46, 253–254; 264.

44 Empty: *CE* III 8,63; childish *CE* III 5,20; Gregory's ἀκρίβεια: e.g. *CE* III 1,87; 1,113; 2,72; 3,1; 3,13 etc.

45 *CE* III 3,9; 1,42; 10,9.

46 See e.g. *CE* III 10,19: "Eunomius tries to refute them by formal logical demonstrations" (ταῖς τεχνικαῖς ἐφόδοις τῶν ἀποδείξεων); 10,20: "the elementary flaw in the logic" (τὸν παιδιώδη παραλογισμὸν τοῦ σοφίσματος).

47 *CE* III 10,50.

48 φιλοπόνως τὴν Ἀριστοτελικὴν τῶν ὄντων διαίρεσιν ἐπιθρυλῶν τῷ λόγῳ ἐξείγρασται γένη καὶ εἴδη καὶ διαφορὰς καὶ ἄτομα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐν ταῖς κατηγορίαις τεχνολογίαν ἐπὶ διαβολῇ τῶν ἡμετέρων δογμάτων προεχειρίσατο (*CE* III 10,50).

in Aetius' and Eunomius' education[49] and consequently modern commentators have tried ascertain to what extent Eunomius is in fact using Aristotelian logic.[50] However, whilst not doubting that they had read Aristotle, it is difficult to conclude that Aristotelianism was uniformly *characteristic* or distinctive of Aetius, Eunomius and their followers (notably, Eunomius accused his opponents of being 'Aristotelian' too!).[51] But if the accusations of Aristotelianism and an obsession with ἀκρίβεια are the result of hostile rhetoric, what is their point? I will suggest that Gregory plays with the notions of Eunomius being a 'good' and a 'bad' arguer. On the one hand, Gregory suggests throughout *CE III* that actually Eunomius is not very expert in that in which he claims expertise: in fact Eunomius is too *lax* (or inconsistent) about his use of language. For example, as we saw above, Gregory criticises Eunomius' analysis of the word light in the Bible: if Eunomius agrees that the same word (φῶς) denotes the two kinds of light (uncreated, intelligible and created, visible light) then he agrees that two things can share a word, but not a meaning in common, which—Gregory claims—undermines Eunomius' wider theory of language (§ 20). Again, Eunomius is allegedly inconsistent in his use of words which should have the same meaning: in the phrase 'true light' Eunomius thinks 'true' *lowers* the conception of the Son below the Father (who is 'unapproachable light'), while in the phrase 'true God', he assumes that 'true' *raises* the conception of God to its highest extent (§ 35). Furthermore, Gregory argues, Eunomius makes an error about the logical status of words like 'true' and 'unapproachable': according to Gregory, these words are absolute terms which admit of no degrees.[52] If the Father is unapproachable, he is completely so. Similarly, the true admits no contamination of the false, or it is not true (§ 22). Even more so, Gregory

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49 Especially with regard to Aetius: Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 16; R. Lim, *Public Disputation. Power and Social Order in Late Antiquity,* Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1995, 122–126, here 116.

50 For useful surveys, see M. R. Barnes, *The power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington, D.C. 2001, 5–6 and R. Lim, *Public Disputation, Power and Social Order in Late Antiquity*, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 23, Berkeley, New York, London 1995, 122–133.

51 For example, Lim connects Aetius' training in Aristotle with his medical training in Alexandria, but denies that the use of Aristotle's *Categories* were widely read in Eunomius' circle (Lim, *Public Disputation*, 116; 131). For Gregory of Nyssa reporting that Eunomius accused Basil of Aristotelianism (with regard to ἐπίνοια) see *CE* II 403–12, especially 411, cited by e.g. Lim, *Public Disputation*, 123 and Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 92.

52 *CE* III 10,22: "The true and the unapproachable are equally repellent of contrary concepts. As truth admits no admixture of falsehood, so the unapproachable does not allow anything contrary to come near."

contends, *genetos* and *agennetos* are logical opposites, so it is nonsense to suggest that "as much as the Begotten is separate from the Unbegotten, so is the Light distinguished from the Light" (§ 18).[53]

In addition to accusing Eunomius of bad logic, Gregory implies that Eunomius' logic reflects his theology: he fails to make the right kind of distinctions: he divides (the meaning of 'true'; the Father from Son) where he should admit similarity and he confuses ('light' and 'light'; the Son and creation) where he should admit distinction. Gregory sometimes uses Basil's tactic of arguing that Eunomius' 'Begotten' is either fully God or not God at all (i.e. Basil accuses Eunomius of worshipping a created being or setting the Son against the Father in a quasi-Manichaean theology);[54] however, his main tactic—in *CE* III at least—is to argue that Eunomius' 'Begotten' is an in-between being, or a mixed being. He is heavy with his sarcasm in noting that Eunomius, in order to 'protect' the Father from *pathos*, has described a Son who is divine, but is himself somehow sullied with the passion of the world.[55] Again, Gregory 'verbalises' this accusation: just as Eunomius' theology presents a mixed-up Son, so his logic is tainted: "why do you link incompatible things in your books? Why do you soil what is pure with your sordid argument?" (*CE* III 2 24).

Gregory's focus on Eunomius' sloppy logic helps to define Eunomius' character: it undermines his much-vaunted claim to precision or ἀκρίβεια in theology and it paints him as a bad pupil of Aristotle. But it also paints him as a bad arguer in another sense. The aim of a rhetorician—especially in a law-court—is to persuade his audience of a certain case and in order to persuade them, he needs to make clear distinctions between things: between guilt and innocence, between intended and unintended actions, between events which could be foreseen and those which could not. Therefore, a substantial part of the rhetorician's training was a training in how to argue by making proper distinctions (such as those achievable through Aristotelian logic).[56] A rhetorician who could not make these clearly was simply a bad rhetorician.

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53 *CE* III 10,52: "So just as living is not a declining from not living, but total opposition, so we reckon that having been begotten is not a decline from not having been begotten, but its contradiction and absolute antithesis, so that what is signified in each has nothing in common with the other in any way whether small or large."

54 Lyman, "A topography of heresy", 59–61.

55 Note that Gregory's accusation is that this mixing happens in the one semi-divine nature of the Son, not between the human and divine natures (as in Gregory's Christology: see in the present volume A. Radde-Gallwitz, pp. 297–302).

56 On the importance of learning to argue (over stylistic refinement) see Heath, *Menander*, e.g. xiii, xvi.

So, as we have seen, Gregory accuses Eunomius of being a sloppy, and thus a bad, arguer. On the other hand, however, Gregory often admits that his opponents' arguments are effective: in that sense he can argue well. Thus, Gregory associates himself with a long tradition of accusing rhetoricians with sophistry—a kind of intellectual enquiry which had abandoned the love of wisdom (*philosophia*) for techniques of persuasion:

> Is he by these efforts deliberately putting forward such propositions against the truth, or using tricks (ταῖς ἀπάταις) to test the insensitivity of his followers, whether they can detect the elementary flaw in the logic (τὸν παιδιώδη παραλογισμὸν τοῦ σοφίσματος), or whether they are unaware of such an obvious trick (ἀπάτην)? I do not think any one is so stupid that he does not see the trick (ἀπάτην) over the use of the same word, by which Eunomius deceived (παρακρούεται) himself and those who think like him.[57]

Compare this with a similar passage from *CE* III 2:

> That is how our clever wordsmith (ὁ σοφὸς λογογράφος) has also somewhere laid to rest his famous dialectical skill (τὴν πολυθρύλητον διαλεκτικὴν), and before demonstrating the matter in question, tells his fairy tale as if it were to children, this fraudulent (ἀπατηλὴν) and unreasoned (ἀκατάσκευον) nonsense of his version of doctrine; he tells it like a story at a drunken party.[58]

In both passages Gregory associates bad logic with deception, and—moreover—the deception of followers who are described as having childlike innocence. Here, rhetoric does not represent the fair and manly competition between two advocates in a law-court nor a contest between two athletes; rather, here rhetoric is a tool for deception used by someone who knows exactly to prey on its power to deceive the weak. Furthermore, in both passages, Eunomius' logic is agreed to be effective (i.e. persuasive) even though it is imperfect: in the first it is said to have 'an elementary flaw', in the second it is associated with the telling of myths or fairy-story stories and is described as ἀκατάσκευον, which can mean having an 'unelaborate' style, or being 'unprepared' or 'disordered' in argumental structure. Similarly, when Gregory compares Eunomius' argument to Circe's potion in the *Odyssey* (*CE* III 2 77),

57 *CE* III 10,20.

58 *CE* III 2,92.

the remarkable thing is that Eunomius is persuasive *despite* the fact that he contradicts himself. Unlike Odysseus' men Eunomius' victims do not even know they have been duped, so total is Eunomius' deception.

In order to explain how Eunomius is 'good' rhetorician in the sense that he succeeds in his deception, even though he argues badly according to the strict rules of logic, I suggest that Gregory implies that Eunomius dominates his opponents by technique (τέχνη).[59] The accusation of τέχνη or τεχνολογία was a common rhetorical device used by one speaker to establish his superiority over another: in a tradition stemming from Plato, it was common for speakers to portray their opponents as using speech that was effectively persuasive, but which was not appropriately subordinated to more fundamental ethical concerns. Plato argued that sophists failed to guide their arguments by dialectical wisdom and self-knowledge; Athenian orators claimed their opponents failed to subordinate τέχνη to civic virtues.[60] For Quintilian the ideal orator was the *bonus vir dicendi peritus* ('the good man skilled in speech').[61] Τέχνη was thus deceptive (indeed, the word had resonances with the practice of magic).[62]

In their most blunt form, accusations of τεχνολογία opposed the 'philosopher' (speaker) to the 'rhetorician' (opponent); usually, however, the opposition was more subtle. Writers, for example, might admit their own rhetorical training but accuse their opponents of a particularly instrumentalised focus on the techniques of argument (often called sophistry or λογογραφία).[63] This is why the Cappadocians accuse Eunomius of being a λογογράφος, obsessed with technique, but themselves accept and own Eunomius' accusation that they attempt "writing without training in logic" (*CE* III 10,54).[64] Against this, they

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59 Gregory is arguing that Eunomius' theology is technical, and ascriptural—a 'Christianity for "experts"'. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 94, citing *CE* I 14. On Eunomius and *techne* see also Lim, *Public Disputation*, 122–133.

60 J. Hesk, "The rhetoric of anti-rhetoric in Athenian oratory", in: S. Goldhill – R. Osborne (eds.), *Performance culture and Athenian democracy*, Cambridge 1999, 201–230, here 217.

61 See Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* I praef. 8; II 15,1; II 16,1; XII 1,1; cf. D. Russell (tr.), *Quintilian, Institutio oratoria*, vols I–V, Cambridge, MA 2002, 5. Cicero, although he reports various points-of-view in *De oratore* also inclines to the view that the good orator must have a good grasp of philosophy, inlcuding ethics.

62 Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus,* 93.

63 Hesk, "The rhetoric of anti-rhetoric", 217; Lim, *Public Disputation*, 127.

64 Although λογογράφος could be a neutral term simply distinguishing a writer of prose from a poet or dramatist, in *CE* III Gregory very often uses the term in contexts where he is emphasising Eunomius' bad literary style (see e.g. 1,83; 5,18; 5,25; 9,31; 9,42) or claiming that he is engaged in deceit (see e.g. 1,1; 2,92; 2,100; 2,152; 5,16; 7,8; 8,13.32). Tellingly, the other work in Gregory's corpus in which the term λογογράφος is used most often is also

portray themselves as men of broad education (παιδεία) and accuse Eunomius of suffering from ἀμαθία and being ἀπαίδευτος. Both Lim and Vaggione see this rhetorical construction of different forms of education as prominent in the debates between Eunomius on the one side and Basil and the two Gregories on the other: although they interpret the opposition in rather different ways, both agree that the Cappadocians try to contrast their preferance for plain speech, broad education and honest intent with Eunomius' verbal complexity, technical education and dubious motives.[65]

This general point about τέχνη is important for our understanding of *CE* III, because it shows that underlying Gregory's assessment of Eunomius' argument is this ancient contrast between 'good' (plain, honest, truthful) speech and 'bad' (technical, tricksy) speech. This is *not* the same as Gregory contrasting his 'philosophy' against Eunomius' 'rhetoric' for, as we have seen, he critiques Eunomius' use of *both* philosophy and rhetoric. Rather, Gregory is claiming that Eunomius is a *bad* philosopher and a *bad* rhetorician—despite the apparent success of his arguments. It is in order to explain that success that Gregory has to turn to Eunomius' argumentative *technique* and claim that it is that by which he persuades his followers, not by any deeper merit in his argument.[66] This explains why a good part of *CE* III is concerned with the issue of literary style. These sections are not, I would argue, peripheral to Gregory's argument, but help him establish fundamentally what is wrong with Eunomius—but also why he is dangerous.

3 *Eunomius' Literary Style in* CE *III.10 and Related Passages*

In this section I will suggest that Gregory's critique of Eunomius' literary style goes beyond the mere suggestion that it is bad. Rather, I will argue that the *particular kind* of faults that Gregory draws to our attention, help him simultaneously to explain how Eunomius wins over his audience and to construct an unflattering portrait of his opponent. In order to investigate this, I will compare

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an anti-heretical writing: the *Antirrh*. Λογογράφος is used as a term of abuse, imply over-reliance on technique, in the exchange of insults between Demosthenes and Aeschines. See e.g. Aeschines, *In Ctesiphontem,* 173; Demosthenes, *De falsa legatione*, 246 (Aeschines calls people sophists and λογογράφοι, but he is guilty of his own charge). See Hesk, "The rhetoric of anti-rhetoric", 213ff.

65 Lim, *Public Disputation*, chapters 4 and 5; Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, chapter 4 ('Logic-chopper').

66 *Contra* Vaggione, if one understands Gregory's comments about Eunomius' use of τέχνη as referring to rhetorical techniques of persuasion, as well as philosophical τεχνολογία, this makes Eunomius' popularity easier, not harder, to explain: Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 99–100.

Gregory's comments with some passages in Longinus' *On the Sublime*. I am using this to illustrate the *kind* of context in which Gregory's comments should be understood: I am interested less in Gregory's actual sources than in how the prose of *CE* III 10 functions. Nevertheless it is a good text to use for at least three reasons: first it is possible, even probable, that Gregory knew this text;[67] second, it provides a useful complement to the very wide range of sources discussed by Matthieu Cassin,[68] thirdly, Longinus' emphasis on sublimity in the *ideas* as well as the *style* of the treatise provides a useful example of how ancient literary criticism was *not* simply limited to matter of form: rather, Longinus and other philosophising literary critics seem to be imply that defects in style reflect defects at a deeper level (much as nineteenth century physiognomists would attempt to trace moral defects in someone's face).[69]

The most obvious literary reference comes right at the end of *CE* III 10, where Gregory ridicules Eunomius for his 'Demosthenic intensity':

> This is what we, who "set our hands to writing without training in logic", as our abuser says, offer rustically in our local dialect (διὰ τῆς ἐπιχωρίου γλώττης ὑπαγροικίζομεν) to the new Paianeus. As to why he has struggled against this contradiction, shooting at us hot and fire-breathing words with the force of a Demosthenes, let those who enjoy a laugh go to our orator's actual writings. Our own is not too difficult to put into action for refuting the doctrines of the impious, but for poking fun at the ignorance of the uneducated it is quite unsuitable.[70]

Here and elsewhere in *CE* III, Gregory compares his opponent to Demosthenes: Eunomius is said to utter his words with 'the fury of a Demosthenes'

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67 I assume in what follows that Gregory of Nyssa was aware of some contemporary literary debates. See e.g. Malcolm Heath's detailed argument that he had read the treatise *On the Sublime*, conventionally ascribed to Longinus: M. Heath, "Echoes of Longinus in Gregory of Nyssa", *VigChr* 53 (1999) 395–400.

68 Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*.

69 Another classic example, in rather a different context, of ethicising literary criticism is Horace, *Ars Poetica* and *Epistulae*.

70 ταῦτα ἡμεῖς οἱ δίχα λογικῆς ἐντρεχείας ἐπιχειροῦντες τῷ γράφειν, καθώς φησιν ὁ διαβάλλων ἡμᾶς, πρὸς τὸν νέον Παιανιέα διὰ τῆς ἐπιχωρίου γλώττης ὑπαγροικίζομεν. πῶς δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἀντίθεσιν ταύτην διηγωνίσατο τοὺς θερμοὺς ἐκείνους καὶ πῦρ πνέοντας λόγους κατὰ τὴν Δημοσθενικὴν εὐτονίαν καθ' ἡμῶν προβαλλόμενος, ὅσοις καθ' ἡδονήν ἐστι τὸ γελᾶν, αὐτοῖς ἐπερχέσθωσαν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις τῷ ῥήτορι. τὸ γὰρ ἡμέτερον πρὸς μὲν ἔλεγχον τῶν τῆς ἀσεβείας δογμάτων οὐ λίαν δυσκίνητον, πρὸς δὲ τὸ κωμῳδεῖν τὴν ἀμαθίαν τῶν ἀπαιδεύτων παντελῶς ἐστιν ἀνεπιτήδειον (*CE* III 10,54).

(Δημοσθενικῷ γὰρ θυμῷ|) or 'with the force of a Demosthenes' (κατὰ τὴν Δημοσθενικὴν εὐτονίαν) and he is described as 'another' or 'a new Paianian' (ἄλλος τις . . . Παιανιεὺς, τὸν νέον Παιανιέα: Paianeus being the family name of Demosthenes, according to the *Suda*).[71] But in what does the alleged similarity between Eunomius and Demosthenes lie? And why might Gregory want to make such a comparison?[72]

In the extract quoted above, the quality of being 'Demosthenic' seems to consist in two things: first, emotional intensity and secondly a more strictly literary quality of his language which is associated with being heavy or distended. These qualities are alleged against Eunomius in *CE* III 10 and implicitly or explicity contrasted with Gregory's own supposed style. For example, with regard to the emotional level of his language, Eunomius is described as speaking with "fervour" (θυμῷ: § 50) and his words are described as "hot and fire-breathing" (τοὺς θερμοὺς ἐκείνους καὶ πῦρ πνέοντας λόγους: § 54). This recalls Longinus' description of Demosthenes' rhetoric as having "abundant warmth and passionate glow" (πολὺ τὸ διάπυρον ἔχει καὶ θυμικῶς ἔκφλεγόμενον); it is 'more emotional' (παθητικώτερος) than Plato's prose.[73] While a rhetorician, as we have seen, was expected to engage his hearers' emotions in order to persuade them, the emotional tone had to be well-judged. Therefore, Longinus, like other literary critics, criticises emotion which is 'misplaced' (ἀκαιρον) or 'unrestrained' (ἄμετρον).[74] Furthermore he makes a connection between out-of-control emotion and out-of-control prose:

> Writers often behave as if they were drunk and give way to outbursts of emotion which the subject no longer warrants, but which are private to themselves and consequently tedious, so that to an audience which feels none of it their behaviour looks unseemly.[75]

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71 All quotations from *CE* III 10,50 and 54. See *Suda* Δ 454. For similar expressions for Demosthenes, see e.g. Plato *Euthydemus* 273a7; Libanius, *Orations*, 55,16.1.

72 On this theme see Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 289–92: Cassin argues that the comparison with Demosthenes serves to disparage Eunomius; I want to make a more specific point about the *particular* way in which Eunomius mimics, but fails to achieve Demosthenic greatness.

73 Longinus *De sublimitate* 12,3: πολὺ τὸ διάπυρον ἔχει καὶ θυμικῶς ἐκφλεγόμενον (S. Halliwell et al. (eds.), *Aristotle, Poetics. Longinus, On the Sublime. Demetrius, On Style.* Cambridge (MA) 1996, 199).

74 Longinus, *De sublimitate,* 3,5.

75 Longinus, *De sublimitate* 3,5.

As we have seen, Gregory compares Eunomius' speech to story-telling at a drunken party (*CE* III 2,92); drunkenness is often associated with excessive or inappropriate emotion and Gregory certainly uses the image to indicate an inappropriate and probably excessive mode of speech. Elsewhere, Gregory makes the connection between emotion and style more explicitly (*CE* III 10,45)—but, surprisingly, he appears to apply it to himself:

> However, I am aware that my book is getting somewhat disorderly (ὑπατακτοῦντος τοῦ λόγου). It does not stay in its correct course (τῷ καθήκοντι δρόμῳ), but like a hot and headstrong foal (κατὰ τοὺς φερμούς τε καὶ θυμώδεις τῶν πώλων) is being carried away by the arguments of our adversaries towards the absurdities (ἄτοπα) of their position. It must therefore be allowed excessively to defy the rein (πέρα τοῦ μέτρου . . . ἀφηνιάζοντα) in order to deal with absurdities (τῶν ἀτόπων). The kindly hearer will pardon the things said, not attributing the absurdity (τὴν ἀτοπίαν) arising from the investigation to us, but to those who lay down bad principles.[76]

The metaphor of the chariot in the hippodrome and the description of the 'hot' and 'spirited' colts threatening to pull the chariot in the wrong direction, surely recalls Plato's chariot motif, which was a favourite with Gregory.[77] If so, the implication might be that Gregory's composition (λόγος) is running away with him, because his emotions are running away with him—perhaps because he is angry with his opponent? If he does not keep his words in check, Gregory's λόγος will not demonstrate the admirable rhetorical quality of moderation (it will be πέρα τοῦ μέτρου—compare ἄμετρον in Longinus 3.5). The image of the chariot running off course not only describes Gregory's own λόγος, but mimics Eunomius' arguments which are ἄτοπα, nonsense—literally 'out of place'. This perhaps alerts the audience to the fact that Gregory is excusing himself on the grounds that it is not his own emotions, but *Eunomius' argument* which has caused him to go off the rails. Gregory *has* to go πέρα τοῦ μέτρου in order to counter Eunomius' ἀτοπία; arguments which go beyond the bounds of normal dialectic, require an answer which similarly goes beyond the bounds. Thus, in a typical example of rhetorical reversal, Gregory apparently portrays himself as the speaker whose prose is out of control, while all the time he is in fact

76 *CE* III 10,45.

77 E.g. *An et res* PG 46; 49,44 and 61,44; *Virg* XXII.

imputing that fault to Eunomius.[78] Note that the faults in his own prose in § 45—being like the 'hot' (θερμούς) and 'spirited' (θυμώδεις) horses—are faults which he actually blames on the influence of Eunomius and are precisely the qualities he then attributes to Eunomius in § 54 (θυμῷ; τοὺς θερμοὺς λόγους).

Secondly, Eunomius' prose is alleged to be Demosthenic, because of its intensity and its weightiness. Thus, Eunomius is said to 'stretch' or 'tense' his argument with Demosthenic fervour (Δημοσθενικῷ γὰρ θυμῷ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον τονώσας: § 50). As Stuart Hall makes clear in his translation, the context is agonistic (ἐν τῷ καθ' ἡμῶν ἀγῶνι: § 50) and with the word τονώσας Gregory seems to be alluding to the tensing of a bow, an image which is reinforced with a reference to the 'sharpness of the rhetor' (τὸ δριμὺ τοῦ ῥήτορος § 50). I suggest, however, that there is also a second range of reference in play. In Greek literary criticism, words compounded from the root ton- were used to describe the quality of writing—specifically, the intensity of prose or its lack. Generally, εὐτονία denoted a quality appropriate to weighty or serious subject-matter: the opposite of informality. Hence, when Menander Rhetor describes two possible levels at which one could write a marriage-hymn, the more formal composition is described as συντόνως (and the other συγγραφικώτερον—"closer to non-oratorical prose").[79] In his *Epithalamium for Severus*, Himerius rejects 'serious music' (σύντονον ἁρμονίαν) in favour of a more relaxed style.[80] In one of his orations, the orator Themistius contrasts Platonic harmony (Πλατονικὴν ἁρμονίαν) with Demosthenic intensity (Δημοσθένειον τόνον).[81] One can see that, although the subject-matter is equally serious, the pace and structure of Plato's sentences are rather different from those of Demosthenes' speeches: in particular, Plato's prose is more conversational. Consequently when, in *CE* III 10,54 Gregory says that Eunomius' discourse has τὴν Δημοσθενικὴν εὐτονίαν, I suggest that he is not just saying that Eunomius is being forceful: rather, he is also suggesting that Eunomius is aiming at quality of 'intensity' which is appropriate for self-consciously serious prose. This is confirmed, I think, by the fact that

78 Gregory's comments on out-of-control prose in § 45 may refer back to the previous paragraph, which does contain a rather long and ungainly sentence: *CE* III 10.45 (GNO II 306,27–307,7). Aristotle compares an over-long sentence to a race track (δρόμος): if runners cannot see the end of it they pant and become out of breath (Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1409a).

79 Menander Rhetor, *On the division of Epideictic Speeches* II 6 (399,17–18): The Epithalamium (Malcolm Heath (ed.), *Menander Rhetor. A commentary*, Oxford 1994, 134).

80 Himerius, *Or.*, 9.32; see: R. J. Penella, *Himerius, Man and the Word. The Orations of Himerius*, Berkeley 2007, 146.

81 Themistius, Περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν τοῖς τόποις ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀνδράσι προσέχειν, Harduin 336a5 (tr. R. J. Penella, *Oration* 27, *On the need to give thought not where* [*we study*] *but to the men* [*who will teach us*], 169).

Gregory refers to Eunomius in *CE* III 4,35 as "the excessive wordsmith and his intense oratory against us" (τὸν σφοδρὸν λογογράφον καὶ τὴν σύντονον ἐκείνην καθ' ἡμῶν ῥητορείαν).[82]

Finally, Gregory describing Eunomius' speech as being "heavy and hard to resist" (βαρὺ καὶ δυσανταγώνιστον: § 50) and having ὄγκος (bulk). To understand these terms in a literary-critical context, one needs to look more closely at Longinus' analysis of ὕψος—usually translated 'sublimity' in English. He tries to identify not only which authors achieve this key quality of great writing, but how it is achieved. His analysis is quite subtle, for he argues that sublimity of thought (we might say content), should be distinguished from sublime style (or form): "and so even without being spoken the bare idea often of itself wins admiration for its inherent grandeur. How grand, for instance, is the silence of Ajax's in the Summoning of the ghosts, more sublime than any speech!"[83] Longinus also asserts that ὕψος is a mean between two poles. If one aims for a sublime *style* but fails to reach it, then one's writing exhibits its weakness (ἀσθενεία), aridity (ξηρότης) and frigidity (τοῦ ψυχροῦ).[84] If one aims at a sublime *content* but fails, one's writing has 'puerility' (μειρακιῶδες); it is 'utterly abject, mean-spirited and . . . the most ignoble of faults' (ταπεινὸν ἐξ ὅλου καὶ μικρόψυχον καὶ . . . κακὸν ἀγεννέστατον).[85] On the other hand, if one over-achieves and exceeds the mean of sublimity, one's writing has turgidity (ὄγκος): "Tumours are bad things whether in books or bodies, those empty inflations, void of sincerity, as likely as not producing the opposite of the effect intended."[86] The contention that Gregory is himself using ὄγκος as a literary-critical term is strengthened by the fact that he consistently uses it in places where he is criticising Eunomius' style, as well as his ideas. In *CE* III 3,27, for example, Eunomius adds a specious mass to his arguments by piling on mere insults; "perhaps such a verbal assault is customary for *rhetoricians*

82 My translation, heightening the literary-critical sense of Gregory's words: note the very emphatic combination of the words λογογράφον and σύντονον and ῥητορείαν with the adjective σφοδρὸν.

83 Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 9,2; One of Longinus' examples of a sublime thought is the words spoken by God in creation in *Gen*. 1: "So, too, the lawgiver of the Jews, no ordinary man, having formed a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, writes at the very beginning of his *Laws*: "God said"—what? "Let there be light," and there was light; "Let there be earth" and there was earth." Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 9,9.

84 Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 3,3–4.

85 Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 3,4. Heath detects a resonance of Longinus' discussion of puerility in *CE* II 128–9: Heath, "Echoes of Longinus", 399.

86 Longinus, *De Sublimitate*, 3,4: κακοὶ δὲ ὄγκοι καὶ ἐπὶ σωμάτων καὶ λόγων οἱ χαῦνοι καὶ ἀναλήθεις καὶ μήποτε περιιστάντες ἡμᾶς εἰς τοὐναντίον.

following some professional principle, invented to add weight to the charge".[87] A similar accusation—and a similarly literary context—underlies Gregory's use of ὄγκος at the beginning of *CE* III 7, where Gregory imagines Eunomius almost sailing up to heaven, with his "high-flown language" (τοὺς ὑψηλοτέρους λόγους) and swelling with "hollow pride" (ὀγκώσας ἐν διακένῳ φυσήματι). In sharp contrast to Gregory's motif of the soul rising to God, this is an undesirable ascent: what is required is some intellectual weight: Eunomius is "like some ship without ballast".[88] But the best example is *CE* III 5,26, where Gregory compares Eunomius' words to patched-together rags, to bubbles which rise then disappear into thin air and to a "foamy mass" (τις ἀφρώδης ὄγκος) which is carried down-stream but disappears when it strikes something solid. The point here is that Eunomius' prose has a *specious* substantiality to it: it appears to have body and weight, until it is challenged.[89] In this context, one can see that Gregory's description of Eunomius' argument being 'heavy and hard to resist' (βαρὺ καὶ δυσανταγώνιστον: § 50) is very sarcastic.

It is worth staying a little while longer with Longinus' analysis of ὕψος in order to see how it relates to his reading of Demosthenes. Firstly, as we have briefly mentioned above, Longinus, like Themistius, compared Plato with Demosthenes:

> the orator, being more emotional, has abundant warmth and passionate glow, whereas Plato, steady in his majestic and stately dignity, is less intense, though of course in no way frigid.[90]

So Plato is less intense than Demosthenes (οὐκ ἐπέστραπται); but Longinus' point is that they *both* achieve the sublime, albeit in different ways. Longinus expands on Demosthenes' style later on, in comparison with the orator Hyperides. The latter, Longinus argues, has more good qualities than Demosthenes: like a pentathlete, Hyperides always comes second in everything, but comes out first on points. His particular virtues are: simplicity, variety of tone, pleasing characterisation; his urbanity is demonstrated in his well-judged and sophisticated use of humour and satire. He can excite pity appropriately. He narrates myths with appropriate fullness and poetic style and is a fluent orator on other

87 *CE* III 3,28: τάχα γὰρ ἡ τοιαύτη τῶν λόγων καταφορὰ κατὰ τινα τεχνικὴν θεωρίαν συνήθης ἐστὶ τοῖς ῥητορεύουσι, πρὸς μείζονα κατηγορίας ὄγκον ἐξευρημένη. My emphasis.

88 *CE* III 7,1.

89 This passage is analysed in fascinating detail by M. Cassin: "'Plumer Isocrate'", 783–796 and *L'écriture de la polémique*, 277–284.

90 Longinus, *De sublimitate* 12,3.

more prosaic themes. Demosthenes, however, although *technically inferior* to Hyperides, has the grandeur which Hyperides lacks:

> But Demosthenes no sooner 'takes up the tale' than he shows the merits of great genius in their most consummate form, sublime intensity (ὑψηγορίας τόνον), living emotion (ἔμψυχα πάθη), redundance, readiness, speed—where speed is in season (καίριον)—and his own unapproachable vehemence and power (ἀπρόσιτον δεινότητα καὶ δυνάμιν): concentrating in himself all these heaven-sent gifts—it would be impious to call then human—he thus uses the beauties he possesses to win a victory over all others that even compensates for his weaknesses, and out-thunders, as it were, and out-shines orators of every age. You could sooner open your eyes to the descent of a thunderbolt than face his repeated outbursts of emotion (τοῖς ἐπαλλήλοις . . . πάθεσιν) without blinking.[91]

Three conclusions can be drawn from Longinus' analysis of Demosthenes. First, that great orator tends towards the copious use of emotion in his speech; secondly, the *effect* of Demosthenes' speech matches its emotional intensity: it is powerful, like a lightning bolt (it has δεινότης), and in style it is intense (τονός); thirdly, Demosthenes has ὕψος. Somehow, however, despite the danger of over-doing it, and despite his lack of precise technique (compared to someone like Hyperides), Demosthenes judges the use of his grandeur and power so that he achieves ὕψος. As Longinus consistently emphasises throughout *On the Sublime*, ὕψος is *not* just a matter of style: no amount of style will help if you are not high-minded: "Sublimity is the echo of a noble mind (μεγαλοφροσύνης) . . . It is impossible that those whose thoughts and habits all their lives are petty and servile should produce anything wonderful, worthy of immortal life. No, a grand style is the natural product of those whose ideas are weighty".[92] The clear implication of Longinus' analysis is that without such nobility of thought, Demosthenes' prose would be turgid, like the swollen and unhealthy tumour. The impression given is that Demosthenes' prose is balanced on a knife-edge: any more emotional power, any more stylistic bombast or any less sublimity of thought and it would over-balance. While Plato's writing—consistently magnificent, solemn and grand—is easy to accommodate to Longinus' notion of the literary golden mean, Demosthenes' prose challenges it. Somehow, just somehow, he manages to be excessive, but get away with it.

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91 Longinus, *De sublimitate* 34 (the quotation in the first line is Homeric, *Odyssey* 8,500 (tr. Fyfe – Russell 275). See also sublimity and passion (16,2; 17,2).

92 Longinus, *De sublimitate* 9,2–3.

The contrast with Eunomius, however, should be clear: Eunomius mimics Demosthenes' intensity of emotion and his powerful style,[93] but he completely lacks sublimity of thought because his theology is in error. If "a grand style is the natural product of those whose ideas are weighty", Gregory has shown repeatedly in *CE* III that Eunomius' ideas are precisely not that: they rise like bubbles and burst in the air. Therefore, while Demosthenes attains to ὕψος, Eunomius only manages ὄγκος.

This point seems to be emphasised by the way in which Gregory contrasts Eunomius with the writers of Scripture: it seems that they have sublime thoughts, by definition because they are inspired by God. We have already noted Longinus' use of ὕψος to denote the sublime. As Longinus uses μεγαλοφροσύνη and related compounds to describe those who have sublime thoughts so a similar kind of vocabulary is used by Gregory to describe Scriptural writers: David is 'great' (τοῦ μεγάλου Δαβὶδ);[94] Paul possesses ἀποστολικῆς μεγαλοφωνίας;[95] John is ὁ ὑψηλὸς Ἰωάννης[96] who has a thundering voice (ἡ βρονταία φωνὴ).[97] These are all in profound contrast with Eunomius, whose attempts at sublimity, even in mere style rather than content, are risible:

> for indeed to be within hearing, and to remain unmoved, is an impossibility, when he says with such sublime and magnificent verbosity (ἐκ τῆς ὑψηλῆς ἐκείνης καὶ μεγαλοφυοῦς εὐγλωττίας), "Where additional words amount to additional blasphemy, it is by half as much more tranquillizing to be silent than to speak." Let those laugh at these expressions who know which of them are fit to be believed, and which only to be laughed at while we scrutinize the keenness of those syllogisms (τὸ δριμὺ τῶν συλλογισμῶν) with which he tries to tear our system to pieces . . .[98]

Here ὑψηλός and μεγαλοφυής are used sarcastically. Equally sarcastic is the reference to the keenness (τὸ δριμὺ) of Eunomius' argument—a quality which as we have seen Gregory again sarcastically attributes to Eunomius in *CE* III 10,50. Finally, we have the idea that Eunomius' words are only to be laughed at. This perhaps invites a further comparison with Demosthenes, whom

93 *CE* III 10,50: τὸ δριμὺ τοῦ ῥήτορος ἐν τῷ καθ' ἡμῶν ἀγῶνι μιμούμενος; see Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 289.

94 *CE* II 151.

95 *CE* III 1,108.

96 See also *CE* III 1,13; 1,36; 6,40; 8,40; 9,38.

97 *CE* III 2,16.

98 *CE* I 551.

Longinus argued was incapable of wit ("When he is forced into attempting a jest or a witty passage, he rather raises the laugh against himself") and calls to mind Gregory's closing invitation in *CE* III 10,54 to laugh at the rest of what Eunomius wrote.[99]

By contrast, Gregory, implicitly presents himself as the true interpreter of the great voices of Scripture: he, therefore, is able to pass on their ὕψος by quoting it and by his interpretation which is accurate (ἀκριβῶς), because inspired by the Holy Spirit.[100] But he is quick to claim that he has no pretensions to high-flown style. Rather, he admits to his 'rustic dialect' in the passage from *CE* III 10,54 quoted above. But even this, I suggest, must be taken not just with a pinch of salt, but taken in its context.[101] Firstly, the accusation of being rustic (ἄγροικος) was a mutual one, thrown back and forth between the Cappadocians and Eunomius.[102] Secondly, it was Plato himself, who jokingly apologised for his rustic and somewhat childish means of expression in the Thaeatetus: "Why are you silent? I hope, Theodorus, I am not rude (ἀγροικίζομαι), through my love of discussion and my eagerness to make us converse and show ourselves friends and ready to talk to one another".[103] Finally, being ἄγροικος was connected to a plain or middle rhetorical style (not necessarily a bad thing).[104] Could it be, then, that Gregory is setting himself against Eunomius, as the 'less intense', but 'steady and majestic' Plato? In any case, in these final sections of book 10 Gregory is implying that Eunomius wins over his audience, not by carefully-prepared argument, nor by great theology, but with forceful and emotional speech—and that nothing of substance underlies it.

Conclusion

One effect of Gregory's rhetorical techniques is to give the *CE* a strong agonistic tone. Gregory heightens this with the use of various images all of which

99 Longinus 34,3: ἔνθα μὲν γελοῖος εἶναι βιάζεται καὶ ἀστεῖος, οὐ γέλωτα κινεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ καταγελᾶται; *CE* III 10,54: "let those who enjoy a laugh go to our orator's actual writings. Our own is not too difficult to put into action for refuting the doctrines of the impious, but for poking fun at the ignorance of the uneducated it is quite unsuitable."

100 See *CE* III 10,9; III 1,42.

101 On this theme, see also Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 291–292.

102 Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 3; for a variety of examples, relating to this and other debates, see also J. A. McGuckin, *Gregory of Nazianzus, an intellectual biography*, New York 2001, 124; 223; 261; 315; 365.

103 Plato, *Thaeatetus* 146a.

104 E.g. Hermogenes *On types of style* II 3,32.

emphasize the *public* nature of their rivalry. Some are taken from Scripture, such as his use of the story of David and Goliath to represent himself and Eunomius in *CE* II.1–11, Others are classical or contemporary images. For example, *CE* III begins with Gregory announcing:

> at the games, it is the rule that either the opponent refuses altogether to go on and voluntarily concedes victory to the winner, or else he is thrown three times in accordance with the rules of the competition, and thus on the verdict of the umpires (τῇ κρίσει τῶν βραβευόντων) the winner receives by triumphal proclamation the honour of a crown.[105]

Then in *CE* III 3 Gregory uses the image of the law-court:

> Those of you who sit in judgment (δικάζοντες) for the truth by reading this, 'Judge true judgment' (Zech 7.9), not awarding the prize (δόντες τὰ νικητήρια) to contention for previously held opinion, but to the truth demonstrated by careful argument. Let the accuser of our position [i.e. Eunomius] be called first, reading out his words as in a court of law.[106]

As we have seen, Gregory appears to reprise some of this agonistic imagery in book 10, for example evoking a chariot-race in *CE* III 10,45. The point that I would like to stress, however, is that this imagery not only sets Gregory against Eunomius, but clearly calls on his audience to decide the victory of one side or the other. In other words, it demands of its audience an *active* role and Gregory implies that important consequences (for themselves, for the church, for the truth), hang on their choice.

In Aristotle's classic distinction, the kind of speech is said to depend on the audience and the 'time' of the subject-matter.[107] Thus, forensic and deliberative speeches are delivered to those who are to make a decision about something. In the former case they are called to decide about an event in the past (is the accused guilty?); in the latter, about future action (what should we do?). Epideictic oratory, however, is delivered to 'spectators' (I 3,2), who listen to speeches about the present and are not called to make a decision about the subject-matter of the speech (although they may be asked to give a prize for

105 *CE* III 1,1.

106 *CE* III 3,14.

107 Aristotle, *Rhetorica* I 3,1–6.

the best speaker).[108] It is tempting to think that Gregory's rhetorical strategy in *CE* is a form of epideictic, specifically the kind that directed blame (ψόγος) on to someone. Perhaps the wrestling motif heightens this sense that he is performing before an audience of spectators whose only choice is whether he convincingly disparages his subject. However, the references to the law-court and the use of the kind of polemic suited to political oratory suggest otherwise: Gregory seems to be drawing his audience in closer to the subject-matter: they are not spectators, but decision-makers and their choice of loyalty will determine the direction of the church community. As such, he is asking them to judge Eunomius' actions in the past, but make a commitment about their own loyalties in the future.[109]

A second effect of Gregory's use of ἦθος and πάθος in *CE* is to isolate Eunomius. While he focuses directly on Eunomius' character, Gregory is rather more silent with regard to his own *ēthos*, often contrasting Eunomius either with Basil (most famously at the beginning of *CE* I), or with the orthodox church as a whole. In general his strategy in *CE* III is to isolate Eunomius by portraying him as a lone figure distinct from the wider body of truly religious Christians.[110] Not only does this undermine Eunomius' credibility (if he is right, why is he on his own?), but it fits the polemical strategy which Michel Barnes identifies in his paper on *CE* III 6. Barnes argues that Gregory of Nyssa refutes homoian theology in general by launching a direct attack on Eunomius in particular. He contrasts Gregory's strategy with that of Athanasius, who tends to assume that anyone who was against him was 'Arian', thus reducing a range of opposing views to a homogenous party. Consequently, Athanasius often presents himself as a lone heroic figure defending the faith against a phalanx dressed against him. Gregory, by contrast, places himself in a crowd of orthodoxy and isolates Eunomius. There may well have been some in his audience who had their suspicions about pro-Nicene theology; but by demonising the lone figure of Eunomius, Gregory invites any waverers to side with himself. In short, while Athanasius assumes that anyone who is not for him is against him

108 See the note on this: Aristotle, *On Rhetoric. A Theory of Civic Discourse* 48, 77 (tr. G. Kennedy).

109 I am here making explicit a view which seems to be implicit in Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*: he comments that *CE*'s purpose (with regard to part of its audience) is to detach Eunomius' pupils from him (298). The blurring of the three kinds of speech was not unusual in late antiquity and underlies, for example, a lot of Christian preaching which calls on the congregation to repent of their past, be affirmed in their present faith and change their behaviour in the future.

110 Gregory does sometimes refer to Eunomius and his followers in the plural (see e.g. *CE* III 10,5), but the main impression which he conveys is of one man set against the church.

(and is an Arian), Gregory's rhetorical move is to assert that anyone who is not for Eunomius can be part of the true church.[111] But Gregory has several ways of persuading his audience that Eunomius is not truly 'one of us', referring to Eunomius' errors in logic and literary style as well as theology: the problem is not that that Aristotle and Demosthenes are bad, but that Eunomius mimics them, whilst being unable to attain their level.

Finally, Gregory's emphasis on ἦθος and πάθος in *CE* III, might help one to understand the work's structure. It is clear that Gregory closes before he has dealt with all of Eunomius' *Apology for the Apology*.[112] Yet he indicates that *CE* III 10,54 is the end of his own work: 'let those who enjoy a laugh go to our orator's actual writings', he writes, implying that he has gone as far as he can. Thus *CE* III closes on a curiously personal and literary note, instead of with a summing-up of Eunomius' arguments.[113] However, even though one might question whether Gregory ends his treatise *well*, there are clear signs throughout *CE* III 10 that it is a planned end: for example, in *CE* III 10,1 he says that the argument he discusses is the 'chief point' of Eunomius' doctrine, which signals that book 10 should be read as some kind of 'summing up' or ἀνακεφαλαίωσις—the question is, what kind of closing is it?

Some teachers of rhetoric, such as Quintilian, suggested that a strong emotional tone was appropriate for the end of a speech. Quintilian remarks that there are two kinds of epilogue,[114] one focusing on the facts (*in rebus*), the other on emotions (*in adfectis*).[115] The former "which is called in Greek the ἀνακεφαλαίωσις", consists of the repetition and collection of the facts or arguments. It must be as brief as possible (*brevissime*), delivered with gravitas (*pondere*) and "enlivened with appropriate opinions and varied with figures", lest it should become repetitive.[116] The latter kind of ending put more weight on the emotions. Although he says that Athenian law-courts forbad and philosophers were suspicious about appeals to the emotions, Quintilian argues that they "are necessary if there are no other means for securing the victory of truth, justice and the public interest".[117] Indeed, he asserts that the close of a case is a particularly appropriate point for the use of appeals to emotion:

111 See in this volume, Michel Barnes, pp. 370–371.

112 See in this volume, Matthieu Cassin, p. 20.

113 Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 288.

114 *Peroratio, cumulus, conclusio*: Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,1.

115 Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,1.

116 Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,2.

117 Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,7: *necessarios tamen adfectus fatebuntur, si aliter obtineri vera et iusta et ira commune profutura non possint*.

> For, if we have spoken well in the rest of our speech, we shall now have the judges on our side, and shall be in a position, now that we have emerged from the reefs and the shoals, to spread all our canvas, while since the chief task of the peroration consists of amplification, we may legitimately make free use of words and reflexions that are magnificent and ornate. It is at the close of our drama that we must really stir the theatre, when we have reached the place for the phrase with which the old tragedies and comedies used to end, 'Friends give us your applause'.[118]

Without making any claims that Gregory was directly influenced by Quintilian, in this paper I have suggested Gregory that is doing precisely what Quintilian recommended. Viewed as theology or philosophy his arguments in book 10 are not clearly-developed and repeat material that has been used before; viewed as passages which support and sum up Gregory's character-assassination of Eunomius they make much more sense. Thus, the argument against Eunomius' alleged claim that the Father was 'God' to the Son began with the highly emotional labelling of Eunomius as Anti-Christ; the history of salvation was designed to evoke two emotions: gratitude for redemption and anger at Eunomius' alleged Satan-like deceptive powers. Similarly, arguments about Eunomius' use of words such as 'true' or 'light' focus on the claims that his logical technique is futile and lax, rather than really engaging deeply with Eunomius' arguments. Finally, Gregory's focus on literary criticism not only provides the audience with a welcome 'purple patch' of entertaining prose, but seals the case against his enemy. If you do persuade, Gregory says to his opponent, it is certainly not because of your theology (which is untraditional, ascriptural and demonic), nor your logic (which is very suspect). In fact, it is not really because you are a good rhetorician: you may be effective in a minimalist sense, but at a more profound level yours is bad rhetoric, nothing more than immoral bombast. And actually it makes me laugh. After this vigorous three-fold attack on Eunomius' theology, logic and rhetoric, Gregory retires from the fight.

Consequently, although I am in agreement with Matthieu Cassin's argument that one needs to read the *CE* with full alertness to Gregory's broad literary context and not treat it just as a technical theological treatise, I would like to push the argument further.[119] Cassin has shown with great care and scholarship how

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118 Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,52; cf. VI 1,51 at the close of the speech "one can open up all the founts of our oratory" (*totos eloquentiae aperire fontes*).

119 Developing an argument by Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 299, but pressing it further: "Loin d'être un traité de théologie systématique et positif, le *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire de

fruitful it is to read Gregory as an 'orateur' as well as a 'theologien'. However, in suggesting, for example, that the passages of invective structure the work as a whole and prepare the audience with an attack on Eunomius' character before attacking his ideas he still seems to assume a distinction between the two forms of attack: theology and invective.[120] Where I would press Cassin's argument further still is to suggest even more unity between the two kinds of attack: firstly, because the passages commenting on Eunomius' method (his use of logic and style) treat his failings not just a failings of technique, but of ἦθος and, secondly, because Gregory colours his theological arguments in such a way that they become part of his mode of rousing the passions of his audience. Precisely because Gregory does not compartmentalise intellect and emotion in his thought (for example, in his account of the soul's ascent to God), we should not compartmentalise them when it comes to analysing his writing—even if that leaves us with the uncomfortable thought that we too are liable to be moved by the power of his words.

Nysse est construit comme une réfutation totale des positions d'Eunome et une attaque contra sa personne. L'argumentation rationnelle constitue une part de l'ouvrage, mais la réfutation de l'adversaire s'appuie tout autant sur des moyens qui relèvent des passions, non de la démonstration proprement dite."

120 Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 299–300. This assessment is made partly on Cassin's reading of Gregory's *Ep*. 29.

PART FOUR

Supporting Studies

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Die Christologie Gregors von Nyssa in *Contra Eunomium* III 3–4: Die Beweisführung Gregors zur Einheit der Person Christi und das Problem des Verhältnisses der zwei Naturen zueinander in Ihm. Ist der Verdacht des Monophysitismus bei Gregor berechtigt?

Theodoros Alexopoulos

Die vorliegende Studie beabsichtigt, die subtile Frage der Einigung der zwei Elemente, des Göttlichen und des Menschlichen, in der einen Person Christi und die darauf bezogene Frage eines latenten Monophysitismus in den Ausführungen Gregors kritisch zu beleuchten. Das wird anhand der Teile 3 und 4 aus *CE* III mit vergleichender Bezugnahme auf andere seiner rein christologischen Schriften, wie den *Antirrheticus adversus Appollinarium* und den Brief *Ad Theophilum* (*Adv. Apoll.*) unternommen.

Die Entfaltung der christologischen Ansichten Gregors von Nyssa in *CE* III ergibt sich aus dem von Eunomius an seinen Bruder Basilius gerichteten Vorwurf anhand des Zitats aus der Apostelgeschichte (2,36) „Gott hat diesen Jesus, den ihr gekreuzigt habt, zum Herrn und Christus gemacht", dass er Christus in zwei Personen teilt.[1] Eunomius gab den Anstoß für eine heftige Reaktion vonseiten Gregors nicht nur wegen des oben angeführten Vorwurfs, sondern auch weil er auf der Basis der Gleichsetzung der Ungezeugtheit mit dem Sein Gottes, den wesensmäßigen Unterschied zwischen Vater und Sohn zu etablieren und den einziggeborenen Logos der Seite der Geschöpfe[2] zuzurechnen versuchte. Da der Logos gezeugt ist und diese Bestimmung seine Ousia betrifft, besteht zwischen dem Unerzeugten und Erzeugten keine Gemeinsamkeit; folglich sind sie seins- oder wesensmäßig different.[3]

1 Vgl. *CE* III 3,12–14 (GNO II 111,12–113,9).

2 Vgl. *CE* III 3,3 (GNO II 108,1–3). Dieses wird von Eunomius anhand des Zitats aus *Proverbia* 8,22 deutlich gemacht.

3 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 7–8 (Vaggione 40–42). Dazu siehe Th. Böhm, „Gregors Zusammenfassung der eunomianische Position im Vergleich zum Ansatz des Eunomius (*CE* II 1–66)", in: L. Karfiková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies* (*Proceedings of the 10th International*

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Obwohl *CE* III keine christologische Zielsetzung hat, unternimmt Gregor trotzdem den Versuch besonders im dritten und vierten Teil, einerseits den von Eunomius erhobenen Vorwurf, dass Gregor in seine Lehre zwei Christi aufnähme,[4] von sich zu weisen, indem er die Einheit der Person Christi in den Vordergrund rückt. Zugleich zeigt Gregor in aller Deutlichkeit die Existenz zweier strikt voneinander unterscheidbaren, aber in einer unvermischten und ungeteilten Einigung (der klassischen Christologie des fünften und siebten Jahrhunderts gemäß)[5] befindlichen Elemente des Göttlichen und des Menschlichen in der einen Person Christi.

Man kann den Beweisgang Gregors zum Abbau der eunomianischen Position in den folgenden Schritten verfolgen:

1) Die Aufnahme der menschlichen Natur durch den Logos bedeutet keinesfalls Minderung seiner Transzendenz.

Gregor beabsichtigt zu beweisen, dass die Welt nicht von einem gewöhnlichen Menschen gerettet wurde, sowie dass die Gottheit an sich nicht leidend ist. Es ist nur ein Herr, der für uns stirbt und uns rettet, nicht als Gott, da der Logos an sich leidenschaftslos ist, sondern (es ist) die Gottheit, welche sich mittels der menschlichen Natur als wirkendes Prinzip erweist. Die Tatsache, dass der Logos die menschliche Natur völlig aufgenommen hat, bedeutet keine Minderung oder Veränderung seines Wesens, auch keine Herabsetzung auf die Stufe des Geschaffenen.

Auf diese Stufe setzt Eunomius den Sohn[6] auch in den Proverbia 8, 22 „Der Herr hat mich geschaffen im Anfang seiner Wege", was die Reaktion Gregors schon im ersten Teil des *CE* III herausfordert. Dagegen wird von Gregor eingewendet, dass sich der Ausdruck „geschaffen" nicht auf das Göttliche und Unveränderliche, sondern auf das Element, das sich mit unserer geschaffenen Natur vermischt hat,[7] d.h. auf die menschliche Natur Christi bezieht. Diese Erwiderung Gregors resultiert einerseits aus der Not, seinen Bruder Basilius zu verteidigen, andererseits, sich in gezielter Weise gegen Eunomius zu wenden,

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Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa, Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004), SVigChr 82, Leiden, Boston 2007, 205–216.

4 Vgl. *CE* III 3, 26 (GNO II 117,9–10). Vgl. auch *Theoph.* (GNO III/I 120, 17f. Mueller).

5 Siehe B. E. Daley, „Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa's Anti-Apollinarian Christology", *StudPatr* 32, 1997, 87–95, hier 95. Vgl. *Theoph.*, (GNO III/I 128,4f.): ἀληθής τε καὶ ἀδιαίρετος ἕνωσις. Vgl. Auch Photius, *Ep.* 284 (III, 25, 752 L/W).

6 Vgl. *CE* III 1,65 (GNO II, 26,26–27): . . . συναρμόζουσι τὸ κτίσμα τῷ κτίσαντι καὶ τὸ ποίημα τῷ ποιήσαντι.

7 Vgl. *CE* III 1,50 (GNO II, 21,6–7).

und gerade dessen Grundvorstellung, dass der Logos Gottes ein Geschöpf ist, heftig zu kritisieren. Dies unternimmt er mit seiner Christologie.

Schon zu Anfang des dritten Teils begegnet man der Zweiteilung des Seins in ein Ungeschaffenes und Geschaffenes—eine Unterscheidung, die in seinen Werken sehr beliebt und gebräuchlich ist und die sein gesamtes System durchzieht.[8] Mit dieser Hauptunterscheidung will Gregor stark die Verschiedenheit, ja Gegensätzlichkeit zwischen der Unendlichkeit und Erhabenheit Gottes und der Endlichkeit bzw. Begrenztheit und der radikalen Veränderlichkeit des Geschöpfes betonen, woraus sich die Unmöglichkeit einer Erkenntnis des Wesens Gottes ergibt. Die radikal-innere Veränderlichkeit der geschaffenen Natur erklärt sich aus ihrem ins-Sein-Treten d.h. durch ihren Übergang vom Nicht-Sein ins Sein.[9]

Für Gott dagegen ist diese Kategorie des Seins ungültig. In *CE* III herrscht die Konzeption der Unmöglichkeit vor, dass Gott sich wandeln könne,[10] dass es bei ihm eine Entwicklung gebe, ein Wachsen, bzw. ein Abnehmen,[11] oder etwas Zusätzliches.[12] In seiner absoluten Vollkommenheit ruht Gott in sich selbst und bedarf keines anderen Dinges, er ist völlig unbedürftig, während alles andere von ihm abhängt.[13]

In Hinsicht auf die wesensmäßige Unveränderlichkeit Gottes hat man sein Augenmerk darauf zu richten, wie Gregor dieses Element mit der Inkarnation als das Eintreten[14] des Unveränderlichen ins Veränderliche verbindet. Die Inkarnation als ein Eintreten des Ungeschaffenen ins Geschaffene bedeutet keine wesenhafte Veränderung des Logos zum Niedrigeren wegen seiner Verknüpfung mit dem menschlichen Element.[15] Nichts ändert sich in der Natur

8 Vgl. *CE* III 3,3 (GNO II 107,20–108,1f.); *CE* III 6,66 (GNO II 209,19–26). Siehe auch *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44 184C). Über diese Unterscheidung siehe die Studie von A. Mosshammer, „The created and the uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium I 105–113", in: L. Mateo-Seco – J. L. Bastero (eds.), *El „Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa: VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 353–379.

9 Vgl. *CE* III 6,79 (GNO II 214,5–6): Ἡ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος πάροδος τὸ τρεπτὸν καταμηνύει τῆς φύσεως.

10 Vgl. *CE* III 8,48 (GNO II 244,8f.): οὐκ ἐκ μεταβολῆς τινος ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου γινόμενον.

11 Vgl. *CE* III 7,19–20 (GNO II 221,15f.): ᾧ ἐπίκτητον τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐστιν οὐδέν; Vgl. auch *CE* II 70 (GNO II 236,10f.): . . . οὔτε μείζων οὔτε ἐλάττων ἐκ προσθήκης ἢ ὑφαιρέσεως γίνεται.

12 Vgl. *CE* III 1,48 (GNO II 17,18f.).

13 Vgl. *CE* III 7,20 (GNO II 222,3–6): . . . τὸ θεῖον ἀεὶ παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ πλῆρές ἐστιν, μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐστι τὸ πλήρωμα ἀεὶ καὶ οὐδεμιᾶς προσθήκης εἰς τελείωσιν δέεται, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ φύσει ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τελειότης ἐστί· τὸ δὲ τέλειον ἐπίσης αὐξήσεως τε καὶ μειώσεως ἠλλοτρίωται.

14 Vgl. *CE* III 3,52 (GNO II 126,10–11): ὁ ἄτρεπτος ἐν τῷ τρεπτῷ γίνεται.

15 Vgl. *CE* III 4,13 (GNO II 138,21–23): τῆς θείας δυνάμεως οὐ συγκαταπιπτούσης τῇ πρὸς τὸ ταπεινὸν συναφείᾳ τῆς φύσεως.

des Logos.[16] Durch diese Einstellung bleibt die Erhabenheit und Göttlichkeit des Logos gewahrt und zugleich wird die Argumentation des Eunomius entkräftet, der das Heilswerk dem geschaffenen Logos zuwies.

2) Die Veränderung zum Besseren (πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἀλλοίωσις), die Erhöhung (ὕψωσις), und Umgestaltung des Menschlichen ins Höhere und Göttliche (μεταποίησις πρὸς τὸ ὑψηλόν τε καὶ θεῖον).

Lehnt Gregor ausdrücklich jede Veränderung in Gott, jede Entwicklung zum Guten oder Schlechten ab, so tut er dies im Blick auf das menschliche d.h. geschaffene Element nicht. Dieses unterliegt dem naturhaften Gesetz der Veränderung.[17] Denn es ist einfach geschaffen, d.h. es ist einer Veränderung zum Besseren fähig. Dies erfolgt durch die Inkarnation. Mit der Inkarnation beginnt das Heilswerk Christi. Während die Gottheit vor der Inkarnation und nach dieser dieselbe und für immer so bleibt, wird die Erstlingsfrucht unserer Natur durch ihre enge Verbindung mit dem Göttlichen geheiligt.[18] Sie unterliegt einer fundamentalen Veränderung zum Besseren,[19] denn sie genießt alle Heilswirkungen der Menschenwerdung, nämlich die Überwindung der Todesherrschaft, des Verderbens,[20] die Ausrottung der Sünde, da Christus sie in seiner menschlichen Natur entscheidend vernichtet hat.[21]

Das menschliche Element in Christus hat für das Unsrige vorbildliche Bedeutung. Wie er emporgezogen wurde, so auch wir; wie er göttlicher

16 L. F. Mateo-Seco, „Σάρκωσις καὶ ἐνανθρώπησις. The Christological Hymns in Gregory of Nyssa", in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 197–216, hier 204.

17 Siehe oben Anm. 9.

18 Vgl. *Ref.* 179 (GNO II 368,4f.): τῆς ἀπαρχῆς ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀνακράσεως εἰς θείαν φύσιν μεταποιηθείσης. Vgl. auch *CE* III 4, 13 (GNO II 138,19–21): πανταχοῦ γὰρ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀνάκρασιν κηρύσσων οὐδὲν ἧττον ἐν ἑκατέρῳ τὸ ἴδιον καθορᾷ ὡς καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀσθενείας διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἀκήρατον κοινωνίας πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἀλλοιωθείσης. Vgl. auch *Antirrh.* (GNO III/I 223,3–10 Mueller): ἡ μὲν θεότης πρὸς τροπὴν ἐστιν ἀκίνητος, … ἡ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον κέχρηται τῇ τροπῇ, ἀπὸ τοῦ φθαρτοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἄφθαρτον ἀλλοιωθεῖσα, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐπικήρου πρὸς τὸ ἀκήρατον …

19 Vgl. *CE* III 3,52 (GNO II 126,10–11): ὁ ἄτρεπτος ἐν τῷ τρεπτῷ γίνεται γίνεται, ἵνα πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἀλλοιώσας καὶ μεταβαλὼν ἐκ τοῦ χείρονος τὴν ἐμμιχθεῖσαν τῇ τρεπτῇ διαθέσει κακίαν ἐξαφανίσῃ ἀπό τῆς φύσεως ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ κακὸν δαπανήσας.

20 Vgl. *CE* III 3,51 (GNO II 119,18f.): … αὐτὴν (scil. die menschliche Natur) δι' ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἀθάνατον ζωὴν ἐφελκύσασθαι…

21 Vgl. *CE* III 3,52 (GNO II 126,9–14). Siehe oben Anm. 15; vgl. auch *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 133,6–9): ἀεὶ ἄτρεπτον ὂν τὸ θεῖον τῇ οὐσίᾳ καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον ἐν τῇ τρεπτῇ καὶ ἀλλοιουμένῃ γίνεται φύσει, ἵνα τῷ ἰδίῳ ἀτρέπτῳ τὴν ἡμετέραν πρὸς τὸ κακὸν τροπὴν ἐξιάσηται.

Ehren teilhaftig wurde, so auch wir. Es handelt sich dabei um die Erlangung vom Menschlichen eines höheren Wertes,[22] seine Erhebung in die Höhe des Göttlichen, seine Erneuerung (ἀνακαίνησις)[23] und letzten Endes seine Verherrlichung![24] Alle diese Ausdrücke weisen deutlich darauf hin, dass die Verbindung der menschlichen Natur mit dem Göttlichen vom Gregor als eine Glanzverleihung, eine Umwandlung hinsichtlich der Macht und der Gnade[25] und nicht als eine völlige Absorption von der Gottheit oder Verlust ihrer Integrität für sie aufgefasst wird.

In Gregors Ausführung im dritten Teil Par. 51–52 findet sich die Einsicht, dass die Inkarnation die letzte Voraussetzung alles ethischen Strebens ist, dass nur von diesem Fundamente aus ein sittlicher Fortschritt möglich ist.[26] In dieser Hinsicht entspricht dieser Gedanke Gregors Grundsatz in seiner Schrift *Contra Apollinarium*, dass Christus dem Unsrigen gleich geworden ist, damit er uns gleich dem macht, was er ist.[27] Christus nimmt das Unsrige auf sich und schenkt uns dafür das Seine; mit der Inkarnation wird auch dem Logos die Bezeichnung des Mittlers mit Recht zugewiesen, da sich das Menschliche mit dem Göttlichen verknüpft hat.[28]

3) Das Problem des Verhältnisses der zwei Naturen in Christus und der Verdacht des Monophysitismus.

Die von Gregor vertretene Anschauung von der naturhaften Fähigkeit der menschlichen Natur, einer Veränderung zu unterliegen, wirkt auf die Weise, wie sich nach Gregor die zwei Naturen Christi zueinander verhalten, bestimmend. In Teil 3 und 4 des Werkes erkennt man den Versuch Gregors, das Verhältnis des Menschlichen zum Göttlichen in ein und derselben Person näher zu definieren. Das tut er anlässlich des von Eunomius gegen Basilius erhobenen Vorwurfs, vertritt Basilius die Lehre zweier Christi. Geht man dieser Frage des Monophysitismus nach, stößt man sofort auf die unmittelbar damit

22 Vgl. *CE* III 4,60 (GNO II 157,19–20): τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον κοινωνίας εἰς τὸ ὕψος τῆς ἀξίας ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι … Vgl. auch *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 217,20–21): ἑνωθεῖσα γὰρ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις συνεπαίρεται τῇ θεότητι, καὶ τὸ ὑψούμενον ἐκεῖνό ἐστι τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ταπεινοῦ ἐπαιρόμενον.

23 Vgl. *CE* III 3,67 (GNO II 131,21–22): ἀνακαινοῦται δὲ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀνακράσεως θεῖον γενόμενον.

24 Vgl. *CE* III 4,15 (GNO II 139,17–18) : τοῦ τὲ ἀνθρωπίνου διὰ τῆς ἀναλήψεως δοξαζομένου …

25 Vgl. *CE* III 3, 52 (GNO II 126,9f.).

26 W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, Wiesbaden 1955, 53.

27 Vgl. *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 146,3–5): … κἀκεῖνος καθ' ἡμᾶς γεγενῆσθαι, ἵνα ἐκ τοῦ γενέσθαι οἷος ἡμεῖς ἡμᾶς ποιήσῃ οἷος ἐκεῖνος.

28 Vgl. *CE* III 10,13 (GNO II 294,4f).

zusammenhängende Frage, ob der Logos bei der Inkarnation die universale menschliche Natur[29] oder eine individuelle, die in einem bestimmten Dasein erschienen ist, aufgenommen hat? Dieses Thema hat längst viele Forscher beschäftigt, die zu unterschiedlichen Stellungnahmen geführt worden sind. Die Mehrheit plädiert mit Verweis unter anderen Stellen auf *CE* III 3[30] dafür, dass die Tatsache, dass in Christus alle Menschen potentiell enthalten sind, nicht aufhebt, dass Christus eine konkrete menschliche Natur, einen bestimmten, individuellen Menschen angezogen, und durch diese ἀπαρχή Kontakt mit der gesamten φύσις gewonnen hat.[31] Darüber hinaus ist bei der Inkarnation der göttliche Logos nicht nur mit der Natur des individuellen Seins von Jesus, sondern auch mit der menschlichen Natur als Ganzes verbunden. Dies ist auch an der Auferstehung erkennbar, bei der Christus zusammen mit dem menschlichen Element seiner Natur auch den ganzen Menschen (ὅλον τὸν ἄνθρωπον) erhebt, sodass Letzterer in seinen ursprünglichen Zustand wiederhergestellt wird.[32]

Hat also der Logos die menschliche Natur völlig aufgenommen, wie verhält sie sich denn bei der Inkarnation zu der göttlichen, die mächtiger ist? Um dieser Frage nachzugehen, muss man vor allem die gewichtigste Idee, welche die Ausführung Gregors (in *CE* III 3,4) durchzieht, in Betracht ziehen. Diese ist wieder der schroffe Gegensatz zwischen der Unveränderlichkeit des Göttlichen und der radikalen Veränderlichkeit des Geschaffenen bzw. der menschlichen Natur Christi.

Vornehmlich mit dem Motiv, die Immutabilität der zweiten Person der Trinität um jeden Preis zu wahren, führt Gregor aus, dass bei der Verbindung bzw. Mischung des Göttlichen und Erhabenen mit dem Menschlichen und Niedrigeren, das Zweite den Vorschriften seines geschaffenen Daseins nach einer radikalen Veränderung zum Besseren unterliegt! Bei der Verbindung der zwei Elemente verbleibt das Menschliche, wie Gregor charakteristisch betont,

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29 Vgl. A. von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, II, Tübingen 1909, 166. Siehe dazu auch A. Meredith, „Contra Eunomium III, 3", in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 165–171, hier 167.

30 Vgl. *CE* III 3, 51 (GNO II 126,5f.): διὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ᾧ κατεσκήνωσεν.

31 Vgl. W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa*, 51; E. Moutsoulas, *Ἡ Σάρκωσις τοῦ Λόγου καὶ ἡ θέωσις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατὰ τὸν Ἅγιον Γρηγόριον Νύσσης*, Ἀθῆναι 1967, 128–131. Bei Völker und Moutsoulas findet man die übrigen entsprechenden Belege zur Begründung ihrer These.

32 Vgl. S. R. Harmon, „The work of Jesus Christi and the universal in the Theology of St. Gregory of Nyssa", in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 225–243, hier 237 mit Verweis auf *Or. Cat.* 32 (GNO III/4 78,3–9).

nicht mehr in seinen eigenen Grenzen und behält nicht mehr seine Idiome, sondern wird vom Herrschenden und Erhabenen (sc. dem Göttlichen) aufgenommen (ἡ δὲ σάρξ… ἀνακραθεῖσα πρὸς τὸ θεῖον οὐκέτι ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτοῖς ὅροις καὶ ἰδιώμασι μενει, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ ἐπικρατοῦν τε καὶ ὑπερέχον ἀναλαμβάνεται).[33] Gregor bleibt in seiner These völlig konsequent. Genau dasselbe Anliegen ist auch in seinen rein christologischen Werken, dem Brief an Theophilus und in *Contra Apollinarium* vorhanden.[34]

Die Vereinigung des Göttlichen mit dem Menschlichen wirkt sich veränderlich im positiven Sinne auf das Letztere aus. Sie führt zu einer Umwandlung. Diese so genannte Umwandlung (μεταποίησις)[35] des Fleisches Christi ins Erhabene, welche den Menschen in seiner Ganzheit, d.h. in Körper und Seele angeht, beschreibt Gregor durch die berühmte Metapher der vollen Absorption der menschlichen Natur Christi von der Gottheit, als ob es sich um einen Tropfen Essig, der im endlosen Ozean verschwunden ist, handele.[36] Bei der Vereinigung erhebt das herrschende Element (ἐπικρατοῦν), d.h. die Gottheit, das Menschliche in ihren Zustand. Das Menschliche bleibt in seiner Vermischung (ἀνάκρασις) mit der Gottheit nicht mehr wie es war, sondern es wandelt sich in die Qualität des Meeres, wie Gregor mit Nachdruck unterstreicht.[37]

Die oben erwähnten Ausführungen Gregors bergen der Auffassung mancher Forscher nach eine Art von Monophysitismus in sich.[38] Ist aber eine solche These berechtigt? Die bisherige Darlegung verschiedener Stellen, die von einer Erhebung des Menschlichen bei der Mischung mit dem Göttlichen zum Stärkeren und Höheren sprechen, bietet den Weg zur Erschließung eines sicheren Ergebnisses. Diese besteht darin, dass bei der Mischung der zwei Elemente das Menschliche einer wesentlichen Veränderung zum Besseren, zur Vergottung unterliegt, das heißt, es verliert allmählich die Merkmale der abgefallenen Natur, wie Verderb, Tod, Neigung zum Bösen usw. und nimmt die Merkmale der Gottheit an, ‚absorbiert von dem übermächtigen Göttlichen, wie ein Essigtropfen vermischt mit dem endlosen Ozean'.[39] Die Umwandlung des Menschlichen ins Göttliche verursacht weder eine totale Vernichtung der

33 Vgl. *CE* III 3, 63 (GNO II 130,14–16).

34 Vgl. *Theoph.* (GNO III/1 126,20–21); *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 201,9–12).

35 Vgl. *CE* III 3,45 (GNO II 123,26–27); vgl. auch *CE* III 3, 62 (GNO II 130,3f.).

36 Vgl. *CE* III 3,68 (GNO II 123,27–133,4f.).

37 Vgl. *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 201,10–24).

38 Siehe dazu, J. Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, Saint Louis 1914, 127; A. Meredith, „Contra Eunomium III, 3", 165–171.

39 Vgl. B. E. Daley, „Divine Transcendence", 89.

menschlichen Natur noch eine Aufhebung ihrer wesentlichen Merkmale (d.h. eine Umänderung dem Wesen gemäß, was das Ergebnis einer Vermischung mit dem Göttlichen wäre), sondern vielmehr eine Umhüllung aller ihrer wesenhaft veränderlichen, ‚körperlichen' Merkmale mit der strahlenden Kraft Gottes.[40]

Die Haltbarkeit dieser Alternative könnte man verständlicher mit einem kurzen Rückblick auf die Mischungstheorien in der Antike machen. Man kann fünf Unionsarten bei den sinnlich-materiellen Dingen ausmachen: 1) Die Union der Zusammensetzung, in der das Entstandene mehr eine Gesamtmenge ist, deren Bestandteile sich in einer wahrnehmbaren Juxtaposition befinden. 2) Die Union der Mischung im aristotelischen Sinne, in der das Ergebnis ein *tertium quid* ist, das in seine Bestandteile aufgelöst werden kann. 3) Die Union im stoischen Sinne, in der das Ergebnis, wie bei Aristoteles, in seine Bestandteile auflösbar ist, das aber kein *tertium quid* ist, sondern eine Gesamtmenge deren Bestandteile nicht wahrnehmbar sind. 4) Die Union der Vermischung, in der das Ergebnis ein *tertium quid* ist, das aber in seinen Bestandteilen nicht auflösbar ist. 5) Die Union des Prädominierens, in der das Ergebnis einer der beiden Bestandteile ist, nämlich der stärkere. In diesem wird der schwächere Teil nicht völlig vernichtet, sondern er verhält sich zum stärkeren wie die Materie zur Form.[41] In unserem Fall verwendet Gregor das Wort Mischung (ἀνάκρασις) im Sinne des Prädominierens zur Beschreibung der Vereinigung des Göttlichen mit dem Menschlichen.[42] In diesem Sinne soll man auch nach Wolfsons Auffassung die von Gregor verwendeten Begriffe zur Beschreibung der Inkarnation von συνάφεια und συμφυΐα verstehen, die letzten Endes nichts Anderes als die unvermischte Union (ἀσύγχυτος ἕνωσις) bedeuten.[43] Diese Unionsformel, die stoischer Herkunft ist,[44] erkennen an der Ausführung

40 B. E. Daley, „Divine Transcendence", 94.

41 Vgl. H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, Cambridge, MA 1970, 385. Dazu siehe auch H. Dörrie, *Porphyrios'* Symmikta Zetemata: *Ihre Stellung in Geschichte und System des Neuplatonismus, nebst einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten*, Zetemata 20, Munich 1959, 54–103 und J. R. Bouchet, „Le vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez Saint Grégoire de Nysse", *Revue Thomiste* 68 (1968) 533–582.

42 Vgl. H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy*, 397 mit Verweis auf den zur Prüfung bestehenden Text *CE* III 3,34 (GNO II 119,21–24).

43 Vgl. ebd. 398–399 mit Verweis auf *CE* III 3,63 (GNO II 130,16–17).

44 Vgl. Alexander Aphrod. *De mixtione* 217,3 (SVF II 155,25f): τοῦ δε τοῦθ' οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς ἐναργέσι χρῶνται μαρτυρίοις τῷ τε τὴν ψυχὴν ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν ἔχουσαν, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ δεχόμενον αὐτὴν σῶμα, δι' ὅλου τοῦ σώματος διήκειν, ἐν τῇ μίξει τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸ σῴζουσαν τὴν οἰκείαν οὐσίαν . . . Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ πῦρ, ὅλον δι' ὅλου χωρεῖν τοῦ σιδήρου λέγουσιν, σώζοντος αὐτῶν ἑκατέρου τὴν οἰκείαν οὐσίαν. Vgl. H. Dörrie, *Symmikta Zetemata*, 26.

Gregors nach Wolfson auch andere Forscher, wie R. Schwager,[45] B. E Daley,[46] Ch. Apostolopoulos[47] und Joh. Kalogerou.[48]

Den Verdacht eines latenten Monophysitismus haben Forscher wie E. Moutsoulas versucht von Gregor abzuweisen, indem sie die Ansicht ins Feld geführt haben, dass sich die so genannte Metapher des Essigtropfens auf den nach der Auferstehung vergöttlichten Leib Christi bezieht.[49] Diese Alternative aber scheint nicht stichhaltig zu sein.[50] Dies aus folgenden Gründen. Wenn man den ganzen Zusammenhang (Par. 60–68) genauer untersucht, scheint dieser unmittelbar von dem Bemühen Gregors bestimmt zu sein, dass es nicht zwei Söhne oder zwei Christi gibt, sondern einen Herrn, in dem seine menschliche Natur in ihrer Vereinigung mit der göttlichen erneuert wurde.[51] Die Hauptabsicht des Autors ist es, den Vorwurf, dass er für zwei Christi plädiert, von sich zu weisen. Das tut er, indem er vor der Metapher des Essigtropfens andere Beispiele der Einigung der Gottheit mit der Menschheit vorbringt, die sich aber nicht auf das Leiden Christi und die Auferstehung beziehen. Es war nicht die menschliche Natur, welche Lazarus von den Toten auferstanden ließ oder die tausende Verhungernde ernährt hat.[52] Mit der Metapher des Essigtropfens beabsichtigt Gregor zu zeigen, dass mit der Inkarnation die göttliche Macht die menschliche Schwäche umwandelt, ohne etwas von ihrer

45 Vgl. R. Schwager, „Der wunderbare Tausch. Zur psychischen Erlösungslehre Gregors von Nyssa“, *ZKTh* 104 (1982), 1–24, 5.

46 Vgl. B. E. Daley, „Divine Transcendence“, 94.

47 Vgl. Ch. Apostolopoulos, „Σημειωτική ὑπέρβασης τοῦ πεπερασμένου ἀνθρώπου: Ἡ ἀντίληψη θέωσης τῆς ἀνθρώπινης φύσης τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ στὸν Γρηγόριο Νύσσης“, in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ Θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 427–440, 430–431.

48 Vgl. J. Kalogerou, „Ἡ ἀσύγχυτος “*ἀνάκρασις*” τῶν δύο φύσεων τοῦ Κυρίου εἰς τὴν Χριστολογίαν τοῦ Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης καὶ αἱ συνέπειαι τῆς διδασκαλίας αὐτῆς διὰ τὴν περὶ σωτηρίας διδασκαλία του“, in: Akten des 18ten theologischen Symposiums mit dem Thema: «Ὁ Ἅγιος Γρηγόριος Νύσσης», Thessalonike 1998, 101–136, besonders 114–115.

49 Siehe dazu, E. Moutsoulas, *Ἡ Σάρκωσις*, 144–145.

50 Siehe dazu, D. Bathrellos, „Jesus Christ in the anti-Apollinarian Treatises of Saint Gregory of Nyssa“, in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ Θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 355–367, 365–366, der sich mit A. Mosshamer (Anm. 53) darüber einigt.

51 Vgl. *CE* III 3,67 (GNO II 131,21–22): ἀνακαινοῦται δὲ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀνακράσεως θεῖον γινόμενον.

52 Vgl. *CE* III 3,65 (GNO II 130,28–131,3f.).

Erhabenheit eingebüßt zu haben, was darauf hinweist, dass sich dieses Bild nicht ausschließlich auf den Leib Christi nach der Auferstehung bezieht.[53]

Darüber hinaus wird der vom ersten Blick erweckte Eindruck eines latenten Monophysitismus abgeschwächt, wenn man den Par. 63 in *CE* III eingehender betrachtet. In diesem Kontext verhält sich die menschliche Natur zur göttlichen wie ein Essigtropfen zum endlichen Meer. Sie wird von ihr verschlungen und umgebildet, sodass sich anscheinend ihre Eigentümlichkeiten in eine andere (höhere) Qualität umwandeln und wird, was jene (sc. die göttliche) ist. Dennoch bleibt ihre absolute Integrität unbeeinträchtigt. Gregor beteuert in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit Apollinarius mit Nachdruck, dass sich das «Fleisch» und der Logos trotz der "ἀνακρασις" dem Wesen gemäß voneinander unterscheiden. Die Hervorhebung ihrer Integrität soll aber auf gar keinen Fall als eine Abweichung zum Nestorianismus verstanden werden.[54] Für die Haltbarkeit dieser Alternative ist der Abschnitt aus *CE* III 3,63 von ausschlaggebender Bedeutung: „Die göttliche Natur ist immer ein und dieselbe und sie bleibt sich gleich. Das Fleisch hingegen ist derart, dass Vernunft und Empfindung darin walten. Mit dem Göttlichen vermischt bleibt es nicht mehr in den eigenen Grenzen und Eigenschaften, sondern wird zum Stärkeren und Höheren hinaufgehoben. Unvermischt bleibt aber die Betrachtungsweise (θεωρία) der Eigenschaften des Fleisches und der Gottheit, solange jeder dieser Teile für sich betrachtet wird."[55]

Die Art und Weise der Mischung, die Gregor an der vorliegenden Stelle beschreibt, ist im Sinne der Stoa, wie schon erwähnt, zu verstehen: Zwei verschiedene und auch entgegengesetzte Wesenheiten kommen zusammen und durchdringen sich völlig, behalten aber paradoxerweise doch ihre ursprünglichen Wesenheiten mit den diesen entsprechenden Eigenschaften. Es besteht eine enge Verbindung zwischen beiden Naturen, ohne dass diese Verbindung ihre wesensmäßige Unterschiedenheit und daher ihre Eigenständigkeit bedroht. Die Idiome beider Naturen werden nicht miteinander vermischt zur Bildung einer dritten, sondern jede behält für sich ihr Idiom.

Infolge aber der Inkarnation und wegen der Vergöttlichung der menschlichen Natur im Sinne von *2 Kor* 5,4 „das Sterbliche würde vom Leben verschlungen" lässt sich eine Art von Verbindung erkennen, in der sich die besonderen

53 Zu dieser Einsicht gelangt mit Recht A. Mosshammer, „Between Incarnation and Resurrection: The Status of Man in the Interim", in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ Θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 503–514, 511–513.

54 Vgl. *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 154,1–159,1–6). Dazu J. Kalgerou, „Ἀνάκρασις", 110.

55 Vgl. *CE* III 3, 63 (GNO II 130,11–18).

Merkmale beider Naturen unter sich austauschen. Es gibt eine Art von *communicatio idiomatum*, die aber nicht in der wesensmäßigen Umwandlung der Menschheit in die Gottheit und umgekehrt, sondern in einer ungeteilten und unvermischten Einigung der beiden Naturen miteinander und in der Erhebung und Heiligung der ersten besteht. Die so genannte *communicatio idiomatum* liegt mehr im Wechsel und Austausch[56] der göttlichen und menschlichen Namen. Aufgrund des engen Kontakts, in den Gottheit und Menschheit infolge der Inkarnation getreten sind, werden die besonderen Merkmale jeder Natur ausgetauscht, d.h. der Herr nimmt die Strieme des Knechtes auf sich und der Knecht wird mit der Ehre des Herrn verherrlicht.[57] Mit anderen Worten: Erhabene und der göttlichen Würde geziemende Namen werden besonders dem menschlichen Element Christi zugeschrieben und umgekehrt wird seine Gottheit mit „menschlichen" Namen belegt.[58] Dies unter dem Vorbehalt, dass jede Bezeichnung alles um das Seiende herum Betrachtete betrifft, ohne das Wesen und das „Wiesein" des Seienden näher zu bestimmen.[59] Diese Vereinheitlichung der Idiome und ihre Zuschreibung auf die eine Person setzt die eunomianische und apollinarische Kritik, dass die andere Seite bzw. Basilius Christus in zwei Söhne teilt, außer Kraft. Unabhängig von ihrer engen und unlösbaren Verbindung werden sich die zwei Naturen nicht ineinander verwandeln, sondern bewahren ihre Identität, solange sie existieren. Diese Position scheint nicht weit von der christologischen Formulierung von Chalcedon entfernt zu sein, der den einen Herrn in der unvermischten Einheit zweier Naturen konzipiert.[60] Sie scheint auch auf die frühe byzantinische Theologie und konkreter auf Photius fruchtbar eingewirkt zu haben.

In seiner Epistula gegen die Theopaschiten beruft sich Photius auf Gregor von Nyssa und konkreter auf seine Schrift *Contra Apollinarium*, die sich in inhaltlicher Übereinstimmung im Blick auf die Bewahrung der Identität jeder der zwei Naturen Christi mit *CE* III 3, 63 befindet. Wie der Herausgeber zutreffend bemerkt, zitiert Photius Gregor wörtlich, der sich fragt: Wenn die Natur von jedem der beiden ineinander gegensätzlichen Merkmalen geistig betrachtet

56 Vgl. *Theoph.* (GNO III/1 127,15–18): καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀκριβῆ ἑνότητα τῆς τε προσληφθείσης σαρκὸς καὶ τῆς προσλαβομένης θεότητος ἀντιμεθίσταται τὰ ὀνόματα, ὥστε καὶ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τῷ θείῳ καὶ τὸ θεῖον τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ ἐπονομάζεσθαι.

57 Vgl. *CE* III 3,66 (GNO II 131,10–13).

58 Vgl. *CE* III 4,64 (GNO II 158,38–30).

59 Vgl. *CE* III 5,56 (GNO II 182,12–13).

60 Dafür plädiert A. M. Ritter, „The Christology of Gregory of Nyssa according to his Oratio Catechetica", in: *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς τὴν θεολογίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης. Πρακτικὰ Θ' διεθνοῦς συνεδρίου περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Ἀθῆναι 7–12 Σεπτεμβρίου 2000)*, Ἀθῆναι 2005, 217–224. Vgl. auch B. E. Daley, „Divine Transcendence", 95.

wird, ich meine die Menschheit und die Gottheit, wie könnten beide eine Natur und nicht zwei sein?[61] Es ist erstaunlich, dass das Schlussverb „θεωρεῖν"[62] geistig anschauen/betrachten genau in diesem Zusammenhang auch von Photius verwendet wird, indem er die enge Verbindung zugleich aber die eigenständige Existenz jeder der zwei Naturen zum Ausdruck bringen will. So lesen wir bei Photius, dass bei der Einung weder die Natur des Logos gegen das Menschliche ausgetauscht wurde, noch sich die menschliche in die göttliche umgewandelt hat.[63] Jede ist von der Besonderheit ihres Wesens bestimmt und bleibt in ihren eigenen Grenzen[64] und behält für sich ihre Idiome,[65] ohne sie mit der anderen auszutauschen. Beide Naturen werden in einer engen Verbindung und unvermischt betrachtet, dem Muster der Verbindung der Seele mit dem Körper im Menschen nach, ein Muster das auch in *Contra Apollinarium* Gregors einen zentralen Platz in seinem Argumentationsgang besitzt.[66] Behält jede Natur ihre eigenständige Existenz für sich, stützt sich die Lehre von der einen Person Christi auf feste Grundlagen. Zur Etablierung dieser Ansicht und zu deren Weiterentwicklung in der byzantinischen Christologie ist der Beitrag Gregors m.E. von ausschlaggebender Bedeutung.

Fazit: Die Ausführung Gregors von Nyssa in *CE* III 3 und 4 nähert sich der Christologie von Chalkedon von einer unvermischten und ungetrennten Union des Göttlichen mit dem Menschlichen. Bei dieser engen Verbindung bleibt die Transzendenz des Ersten, während das Zweite einer Veränderung zum Höheren unterliegt, ohne seine Integrität zu verlieren. Für diese Union verwendet Gregor das Wort μίξις-ἀνάκρασις, das in seinem Wortschatz die enge Verbindung von Elementen im Blick auf ihr Wesen bedeutet, welche numerisch zu unterscheiden sind. Dabei handelt es sich mehr um eine Relation als um eine totale Absorption des Menschlichen vom Göttlichen. So ist jeder Verdacht von Monophysitismus beseitigt.

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61 *Ep.* 285 (III 42,1349–1351 Laurdas/Westerink). Vgl. *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 196,3–5).

62 Vgl. *Ep.* 284 (III 21,635 L/W); (III 45,1476 L/W); (III 67,2227–2230 L/W).

63 Vgl. *Ep.* 284 (III 85,2873–2874 L/W): οὐχ ἡ θεία τοῦ λόγου φύσις πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἠμείφθη, οὐχ ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη πρὸς τὴν θείαν μεταβέβληται.

64 Vgl. *Ep.* 284 (III 21,635 L/W): μένει δὲ τούτων ἑκατέρα ἐν τοῖς φυσικοῖς καὶ ἰδίοις ὅροις.

65 Vgl. *Ep.* 284 (III 16,458–459 L/W): ἀναλλοιώτους καὶ ἀμεταβλήτους φυλαττούσας τὴν οἰκείαν ἰδιότητα.

66 Vgl. *Ep.* 284 (III 21,620–23,708 L/W). In einem anderen Zusammenhang verwendet Gregor, um die Vereinigung der zwei Naturen zu erläutern, das Bild des Feuers, das rundherum den Stoff angreift. Wie sich die Flamme des Feuers mit dem Stoff verbindet, ohne sich in den Stoff einzuschließen, so können wir in einem gotteswürdigen Verständnis die Vereinigung und Annäherung zwischen der göttlichen Natur und der menschlichen denken. Vgl. *Or Cat.* 10 (GNO III/4 38,24–39,10). Genau dieselbe Metapher ist auch bei Photius vorhanden. Vgl. *Ep.* 284 (III 25,778–789 L/W).

Une évolution de Grégoire ? La distinction κτιστόν / ἄκτιστον du *CE* I au *CE* III

Père Xavier Batllo

Dans le contexte particulier de la querelle anoméenne, la distinction κτιστόν / ἄκτιστον (créé/incréé)[1] permet à Grégoire de Nysse de justifier ses positions et de remettre en cause le subordinatianisme défendu par Eunome. Cette distinction créé/incréé revient donc régulièrement dans le long traité *Contre Eunome* (noté *CE*), tout spécialement en *CE* I et *CE* III[2], ce qui permet de comparer les différents emplois qu'en fait Grégoire au cours de la même controverse et contre le même auteur. L'étude exhaustive de ces emplois à travers les quelque cinq cents pages des *CE* I et III[3] dépasserait le cadre de cette présentation, mais par le biais de certains exemples précis, il demeure toujours possible d'examiner si, dans l'intervalle d'une à trois années qui sépare ces deux œuvres[4], une évolution marquerait la conception par Grégoire de la distinction créé/incréé.

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1 Sur la distinction créé/incréé dans la pensée philosophique de Grégoire, cf. les réflexions toujours précieuses de H. U. von Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée. Essai sur la Philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1942, spécialement 1-10 ; comme fondement ontologique de la mystique de Grégoire, cf. W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, Wiesbaden 1955, 23-30 ; en lien avec la notion de participation, cf. D. L. Balás, *Μετουσία θεοῦ, Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to saint Gregory of Nyssa*, StAns 55, Roma 1966, 23-75, spécialement 54-63, consacrées à l'échelle des êtres de *CE* I 270s ; en lien avec la philosophie du langage, cf. M. Zupi, *Incanto e incantesimo del dire. Logica e/o mistica nella filosofia del linguaggio di Platone* (*Cratilo e Sofista*) *e Gregorio di Nissa* (*Contra Eunomio*), StAns 143, Roma 2007 ; enfin, sur l'originalité de cette distinction, cf. A. Lévy, « Aux Confins du créé et de l'incréé : les dimensions de l'épectase chez Grégoire de Nysse », *RSPhTh* 84 (2000), 247-274. Dans le contexte de la controverse avec Eunome, cf. A. Schindler, *Die Begründung der Trinitätslehre in der eunomianischen Kontroverse. Eine Untersuchung zu den Apologien des Eunomius, zu Basilius' des Grossen Schrift gegen Eunomius und zu Gregors von Nyssa trinitarischen Schriften*, Zürich 1964, spécialement 158-168 ; B. Barmann, *The Cappadocian Triumph over Arianism*, Stanford University 1971, 243-306 ; A. Meredith, *Studies in the Contra Eunomium of Gregory of Nyssa*, Oxford 1972, spécialement 257-288 ; plus récemment, mais très brièvement, B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 119-123.

2 La distinction κτιστόν / ἄκτιστον n'intervient que deux fois dans le *CE* II, en *CE* II 69 (GNO I 246,7-16) et *CE* II 213 (GNO I 287,11-22).

3 Selon la pagination des GNO.

4 Le processus de composition du *CE* I est assez bien connu grâce à la *Lettre* 29 de Grégoire à son frère Pierre de Sébaste : commencée sous forme de notes à l'époque de la mort de

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La distinction créé/incréé apparaît pour la première fois chez Grégoire de Nysse, dans le cadre d'un exposé systématique sur l'ensemble des êtres, en *CE* I 270-271[5]. Grégoire propose dans ces paragraphes une répartition des êtres articulée autour de deux distinctions fondamentales, la première entre sensible et intelligible (νοητόν/αἰσθητόν), qui concerne tous les êtres (πάντων τῶν ὄντων), la seconde entre créé et incréé (κτιστόν/ἄκτιστον), qui n'est énoncée que pour les intelligibles. Un nouvel exposé systématique consacré à l'ensemble des êtres intervient en *CE* III 6,66, et cette présentation mérite d'être comparée à celle du *CE* I (les termes identiques étant soulignés)[6] :

CE I 270-271

De tous les êtres, la distinction la plus haute est la division entre l'intelligible et le sensible. (…) Mais la raison divise en deux aussi la pensée de celle-ci [la nature intelligible]. De fait, il est logique de percevoir l'une ***incréée***, l'autre ***créée*** : est *incréée* celle productrice de la création, ***créée*** celle qui, par la nature ***incréée***, a sa cause et capacité d'être[7].

CE III 6,66

De tous les êtres, en effet, ***la distinction la plus haute est la division entre*** le ***créé*** et l'***incréé***, l'un comme cause de ce qui est advenu, l'autre comme advenu à partir de là[8].

Basile (c'est-à-dire en automne 378 selon J.-R. Pouchet, « La date de l'élection épiscopale de saint Basile et celle de sa mort », *RHE* 87 (1992) 5-33 ; cf. sur ce point P. Maraval, « Retour sur quelques dates concernant Basile de Césarée et Grégoire de Nysse », *RHE* 99 (2004) 153-166, qui adopte les corrections apportées par J.-R. Pouchet, et les défend de façon convaincante contre les critiques de T.-D. Barnes, « The Collapse of the Homoeans in the East », *StPatr* 29 (1997) 3-16), l'œuvre fut achevée durant l'année 380. Le *CE* III fut rédigé pour sa part entre 381 et 383, plutôt vers 383, cf. M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique à la fin du IV^e siècle : Grégoire de Nysse, Contre Eunome III*, Thèse de doctorat, Université Paris IV Sorbonne, Paris 2009, t. I, 8-9. L'écart chronologique entre les deux œuvres varie donc d'une à trois années.

5 Le passage du traité (contemporain du *CE* I) *De hominis opificio* XVI (PG 44, 184C) pourrait être la toute première mention de cette distinction, mais celle-ci n'est énoncée que pour souligner la différence entre Dieu et l'homme créé à son image, et non dans le cadre d'un exposé systématique sur les êtres.

6 Sauf indication contraire, les traductions françaises sont de l'auteur.

7 *CE* I 270-271 (GNO I 105,19-106,6) : Πάντων τῶν ὄντων ἡ ἀνωτάτω διαίρεσις εἴς τε τὸ νοητὸν καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν τὴν τομὴν ἔχει. (…) ὁ δὲ λόγος εἰς δύο τέμνει καὶ ταύτης [la nature intelligible] τὴν ἔννοιαν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἄκτιστος ἡ δὲ κτιστὴ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀκολουθίας καταλαμβάνεται, ἄκτιστος μὲν ἡ ποιητικὴ τῆς κτίσεως, κτιστὴ δὲ ἡ διὰ τῆς ἀκτίστου φύσεως τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ εἶναι ἔχουσα.

8 *CE* III 6,66 (GNO II 209,19-21) : Τῶν γὰρ ὄντων πάντων ἡ ἀνωτάτω διαίρεσις εἰς τὸ κτιστὸν καὶ ἄκτιστον τὴν τομὴν ἔχει, τὸ μὲν ὡς αἴτιον τοῦ γεγνότος, τὸ δὲ ὡς ἐκεῖθεν γενόμενον.

Ces deux passages présentent, presque au mot près, la même formule introductive, laquelle embrasse l'ensemble des êtres dans une distinction qui se veut la plus haute (ἀνωτάτω)[9]. Cependant, alors qu'en *CE* I 270-271, la division sensible/intelligible tient cette place privilégiée, le passage du *CE* III 6,66 définit au contraire la distinction créé/incréé comme la plus haute, l'étend à l'ensemble des êtres et passe sous silence la division entre sensible et intelligible. Comment interpréter des approches si différentes situées, à peu près, au début et à la fin de la rédaction du traité contre Eunome ?

Par le biais d'un examen chronologique de plusieurs œuvres de Grégoire de Nysse, A. Meredith soulignait le contraste entre, d'une part, le *de Virginitate* et le *de Anima et Resurrectione*, marqués par le platonisme et l'opposition sensible/intelligible, et d'autre part le *CE*, caractérisé par la distinction créé/incréé[10]. Selon A. Meredith, la présence ici et là dans le *CE* de la distinction sensible/intelligible pourrait alors être interprétée comme un vestige de la division philosophique traditionnelle νοητόν/αἰσθητόν, et l'exposé de *CE* III 6,66, où elle disparaît complètement, serait le fruit des réflexions théologiques du Cappadocien[11]. Dans la ligne de cette hypothèse, il serait alors possible de

9 Sans doute ne faut-il pas accorder une importance trop grande à ce terme ἀνωτάτω, car Grégoire ne fait peut-être que reprendre ici un terme d'usage courant pour qualifier ses distinctions, cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* VII 217 ; Clément d'Alexandrie, *Str.* VII 12,75,3 ; sur ce terme, cf. F. Mann, « Das Vokabular des Eunomios im Kontext Gregors », in : L.-F. Mateo-Seco – J.-L. Bastero (eds.), *El « Contra Eunomium I » en la Produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 173-202, spécialement 181 : « Die nach diesen Einleitungsworten an den genannten Stellen folgenden Lehrreferate sind so klassisch für antike Philosophie, daß sich weitere Erklärungen erübrigen. Und sie sind dies bis in die Wortwahl und in das Detail der Diktion, wie gerade diese Einleitungssätze es deutlich machen. »

10 Cf. A. Meredith, *Studies in the Contra Eunomium*, 267-279, qui étudie successivement les traités *de Virginitate*, *de Anima et Resurrectione*, *CE* I, *CE* II et *CE* III. L'ordre chronologique proposé par A. Meredith peut être retenu, toutes réserves faites sur le traité *An. et res*, dont la composition pourrait dater de plusieurs années après la mort de Macrine (juillet 379) selon G. May, « Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa », in : M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et Culture philosophique dans la Pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Acte du colloque de Chevetogne (22-26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 51-67 (ici 57). Ces études comparatives demeurent toujours délicates, car une datation précise, ou même relative, des œuvres de Grégoire reste difficile, cf. P. Maraval, « Chronology of works », in : L.-F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 153-169 (ici 153).

11 Cf. A. Meredith, *Studies in the Contra Eunomium*, 278 : « The presence of the more traditional way of talking about God alongside the newer distinction is what we would have expected. The time gap that separates the semi-platonic *De Anima* from the *Contra Eunomium* – probably barely six months – is too small to admit of such a fundamental

comprendre la présentation de *CE* I 270-271 comme due à un Grégoire encore fortement marqué par le platonisme, tandis que celle de *CE* III 6,66 serait le témoin de son évolution, la conception chrétienne de la création l'emportant toujours plus sur la division philosophique bipartite sensible/intelligible. Autrement dit, ces deux passages *CE* I 270-271 et *CE* III 6,66 pourraient être interprétés dans le sens d'une vision du monde qui se christianiserait toujours plus[12].

Cependant, il semble possible d'envisager une autre approche, non plus chronologique mais reposant sur le contexte immédiat de chacun des deux exposés ; en précisant dans quel cadre et pour quelles raisons Grégoire fait intervenir ces deux résumés métaphysiques, il serait peut-être possible de rendre compte de leurs différences.

L'échelle des êtres présentée en *CE* I 270-271 se place juste au début du chapitre XXII de cette œuvre (*CE* I 270-294)[13]. Ce chapitre XXII ne peut être séparé du chapitre XXIII (*CE* I 295-320), qui s'en veut la justification scripturaire[14]. Cet ensemble chapitres XXII-XXIII constitue ainsi un tout, orienté vers un unique problème, la réfutation d'une diminution, d'un plus ou moins affirmé

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and coherent rethinking of traditional language that *no* vestiges of it remains ». (souligné dans le texte). *Id.*, 279 (à propos de *CE* III 6,66) : « The similarity and difference at the same time in the use of the formula may well be due to theological reflection ».

12 A. A. Mosshammer, « The Created and the Uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa », in : L.-F. Mateo-Seco – J.-L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I"*, 359-368, propose une autre évolution de Grégoire, laquelle ne se ferait pas dans le sens d'une prédominance toujours plus forte de la distinction créé/incréé sur celle sensible/intelligible, mais dans l'union de ces deux distinctions : le *CE* I les relierait pour la première fois en insistant sur la notion de liberté, le *CE* II développerait la théorie du διάστημα, et le *CE* III marquerait l'achèvement de la réflexion du Cappadocien par la combinaison des deux notions de liberté et διάστημα. Une telle interprétation paraît discutable, puisque le rôle de la liberté dans le *CE* I, s'il est réel, n'est cependant pas déterminant, et la notion de διάστημα trouve ses contours philosophiques majeurs dès *CE* I 362-375 (GNO I 134, 8-137, 19) et non dans le *CE* II.

13 La place des chapitres dans le *CE* I proposée ici suit les conclusions des recherches paléographiques effectuées par M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la Polémique*, t. I, 135-137 (résultats repris dans M. Cassin, « Les *kephalaia* du livre I », in : *Grégoire de Nysse, Contre Eunome I, 147-691*, trad. R. Winling, SC 524, Paris 2010, 359-364).

14 Selon l'annonce de Grégoire à la fin du ch. XXII, cf. *CE* I 294 (GNO I 113, 16-19) : ἐπειδὴ γὰρ κριτήριον ἀσφαλὲς τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπὶ παντὸς δόγματος ἡ θεόπνευστός ἐστι μαρτυρία, καλῶς ἔχειν ἡγοῦμαι τῇ παραθέσει τῶν θείων καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον λόγον πιστώσασθαι (Puisqu'en effet le témoignage divinement inspiré est un critère solide de la vérité pour toute doctrine, je pense qu'il est bon que notre parole aussi soit accréditée par comparaison avec celles qui sont divines).

par Eunome à propos du Fils et de l'Esprit[15]. Pour ce faire, Grégoire commence par exposer les multiples modalités de plus ou moins entre les êtres et procède en deux temps : il classe d'abord les êtres en différentes catégories et c'est dans ce cadre bien particulier qu'intervient l'exposé *CE* I 270-271 avec les deux distinctions sensible/intelligible et créé/incréé ; après avoir délimité par ce biais trois catégories d'êtres (sensibles, intelligibles créés, intelligibles incréés), le Cappadocien examine en un deuxième temps comment envisager pour chacune de ces catégories la notion de plus ou moins. Il explique alors qu'il y a pour les sensibles une distinction en plus ou moins selon les qualités corporelles, pour les intelligibles créés une distinction en plus ou moins selon la participation au Bien, pour la nature incréée des distinctions *sans* plus ou moins.

La mise en évidence de ces trois modes de distinction ayant été faite, Grégoire peut alors réfuter l'affirmation d'Eunome à l'origine de ses explications[16]. Effectivement, il ne saurait y avoir de plus ou moins pour le Fils et l'Esprit selon la substance incréée elle-même, car il n'y a pas de plus ou moins de la substance en général ; il n'y a pas de plus ou moins pour le Fils et l'Esprit selon les intelligibles créés, car Fils et Esprit ne participent pas au Bien mais sont le Bien[17] ; il n'y a pas de plus ou moins enfin selon les sensibles, car Fils et Esprit sont incorporels.

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15 Cette notion de diminution constitue l'objet des propos de Grégoire juste avant le ch. XXII, cf. *CE* I 268 (GNO I 104, 26-105,1) : εἶτα βραχύτητά τινα τῇ οὐσίᾳ κατ' ἐλάττωσιν ἐνθεωροῦσιν (Ils considèrent ensuite dans la substance une sorte de raccourcissement selon une diminution) ; c'est elle qui pousse Grégoire à présenter ses propres conceptions, cf. *CE* I 269 (GNO I 105,15-18) : οὑτωσὶ δὲ σκοπήσωμεν· καί μοι συγκεχωρήσθω διδασκαλίας χάριν καὶ σαφηνείας τοῦ παρὰ τῶν ἐναντίων κατασκευαζομένου ψεύδους ἐπὶ τὴν ἔκθεσιν τῶν ἡμετέρων ὑπολήψεων τὸν λόγον προάγοντι (Mais poussons l'examen de la façon suivante ; et qu'il me soit permis, en vue de l'élucidation et de la mise au clair du mensonge établi par nos adversaires, de conduire le traité à l'exposé de nos conceptions) ; c'est elle enfin que Grégoire considère comme rejetée définitivement à la fin de cet ensemble ch. XXII-XXIII, cf. *CE* I 316 (GNO I 120,21-24) : ὥστε τὸ ἄνω τῆς κτίσεως καὶ τῆς πρωτευούσης καὶ διὰ πάντων τελείας φύσεως εἶναι πιστευόμενον μηδενὶ τρόπῳ τὸν τῆς ἐλαττώσεως παραδέχεσθαι λόγον (de sorte que ce qui est cru au-dessus de la création et être de la nature première et parfaite en tout n'admet d'aucune manière la notion de diminution). La notion de diminution (ἐλάττωσις), énoncée en *CE* I 268 et reprise ici en *CE* I 316, forme ainsi comme une grande inclusion, délimitant toute la partie *CE* I 270-315 consacrée à cette question.

16 Le paragraphe *CE* I 282 (GNO I 109,14-22) constitue la transition : Grégoire a exposé précédemment les différentes manières d'envisager le plus ou moins, il examine ensuite à l'aide de ces présupposés (Τούτων δὲ ἡμῖν οὕτω προειρημένων) le discours de ses adversaires.

17 C'est sur ce point que Grégoire consacre le plus long développement, organisé en deux temps : le plus ou moins suppose participation et donc composition, cf. *CE* I 284-286

L'enjeu pour Grégoire, dans cette grande démonstration du *CE* I, consiste donc à cerner le plus précisément possible tous les cas de plus ou moins envisageables, pour montrer finalement qu'aucun d'eux n'est applicable à la Triade et rendre ainsi sa démonstration véritablement concluante. L'utilisation des deux modes de distinctions sensible/intelligible et créé/incréé lui offre, dans ce cadre, les critères adéquats.

L'exposé ontologique de *CE* III 6,66 se place dans un tout autre contexte. Il ne s'agit plus pour Grégoire de remettre directement en cause un quelconque plus ou moins entre les membres de la Triade, mais de répondre à la question générale de tout ce tome : « L'existence du Fils a-t-elle commencé dans le temps ? »[18] Ce tome VI du *CE* III débute par un exposé de Grégoire sur la marque (γνώρισμα) propre et caractéristique de la divinité[19]. Cette caractéristique, fondée sur *Ex* 3, 14, peut se résumer ainsi : est divin « ce qui est saisi selon l'éternel et le sans limite dans l'être »[20]. Ce présupposé bien établi, Grégoire entame la réfutation proprement dite des déclarations d'Eunome. Celui-ci affirmait que si l'artisan commence au moment de son ouvrage, il faut que le producteur des temps commence à être à partir d'un commencement du même genre[21]. La réponse de Grégoire pourrait être résumée ainsi. Le Cappadocien s'appuie sur l'absence de points communs entre les caractéristiques propres (γνωρίσματα) du Fils apprises de l'Écriture et celles de ses œuvres, divergence qui révèle selon Grégoire l'absence de parenté entre le Monogène et la création[22]. Ainsi,

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(GNO I 110,6-111,2), et la notion de composition supprime le Salut, cf. *CE* I 286-291 (GNO I 111,2-112,20) : comment le Fils pourrait-il donner ce qu'il ne possède pas substantiellement lui-même.

18 Cf. le titre général donné à ce tome par M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la Polémique*, t. 2, 331. Grégoire rappelle la sentence de ses opposants, cf. *CE* III 6,2 (GNO II 185,18-19) : εἰ ἦν, οὐ γεγέννηται, καὶ εἰ γεγέννηται, οὐκ ἦν (s'il était, il n'a pas été engendré, et s'il a été engendré, il n'était pas).

19 Cf. *CE* III 6,3-22 (GNO II 186,9-194,7).

20 *CE* III 6,3 (GNO II 186,13-14) : ὃ κατὰ τὸ ἀΐδιόν τε καὶ ἀόριστον ἐν τῷ εἶναι καταλαμβάνεται.

21 Cf. *CE* III 6,61-62 (GNO II 207,24-208,2) : εἰ ὁ δημιουργός, φησίν, ἀπὸ χρόνου τῆς δημιουργίας ἄρχεται· οὐ γὰρ ἄλλῳ τινὶ τὴν τῶν γεγονότων ἀργὴν ἔστι σημειώσασθαι, μὴ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ διαστήματι τοῦ χρόνου τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰ τέλη τοῖς γινομένοις ὁρίζοντος. διὰ τοῦτό φησι δεῖν καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν χρόνων ἀπὸ τῆς ὁμοίας ἀρχῆς τοῦ εἶναι ἄρξασθαι. Pour la délimitation de ce fragment, cf. M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la Polémique*, t. 2, note 157, 367.

22 Cf. *CE* III 6,63-64 (GNO II 208,19-23) : εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐν ἑτέροις τισὶν εἶχή τινα κοινωνίαν ὁ υἱὸς πρὸς τὴν κτίσιν, ἔδει πάντως μηδὲ κατὰ τὸν τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπον παρηλλάχθαι λέγειν· εἰ δὲ ἄμοιρος ἡ κτίσις τῶν τοιούτων ἐστὶ τῶν ὅσα περὶ τὸν υἱὸν μεμαθήκαμεν, ἀναγκαῖον πάντως μηδὲ κατὰ τοῦτο λέγειν τὴν κοινωνίαν ἔχειν. (Donc, si le Fils possédait en d'autres domaines une certaine communauté avec la création, il faudrait dire qu'il ne diffère absolument pas non plus selon le mode de subsistence ; mais si la création n'a pas part aux genres de

puisque les caractéristiques du Fils sont autres que celles des créatures, il s'ensuit que le Fils ne saurait connaître de commencement comme celles-ci, mais possède l'être éternel et sans limite, conformément à la caractéristique propre de la divinité énoncée précédemment.

La démonstration de Grégoire pourrait s'achever ici, mais le Cappadocien éprouve le besoin d'apporter une nouvelle justification à ses propos et insère alors son exposé sur les êtres, évoqué plus haut (*CE* III 6,66). Grégoire introduit la division la plus haute de tous les êtres, qu'il définit comme la distinction créé/incréé, et souligne que celle-ci exclut tout mélange des caractéristiques propres[23]. Dès lors, puisque le propre de la création est d'être marquée par « commencement, fin et milieu des temps »[24], la vie du Fils créateur doit échapper à toute limite, *i.e.* à tout commencement. Cette précision ontologique sur la distinction créé/incréé permet par ailleurs à Grégoire de répondre à une objection, qu'il se pose sans doute à lui-même[25], et qui donne finalement plus de poids à l'ensemble de son raisonnement[26].

Comme il est possible de le constater, l'exposé ontologique de Grégoire s'inscrit ici dans un contexte bien défini, orienté uniquement vers l'opposition Créateur/créatures et celle de leurs caractéristiques propres. La division créé/incréé proposée par Grégoire *suffit* alors pour sa démonstration, et contrairement à *CE* I 270-271, Grégoire n'a nul besoin d'évoquer la distinction sensible/intelligible, qui n'apporterait rien de substantiel à sa démonstration.

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choses que nous avons apprises au sujet du Fils, il est nécessaire de dire qu'il ne possède absolument pas non plus de communauté en cela, trad. M. Cassin). Ce principe était déjà annoncé par Grégoire en *CE* I 443 (GNO I 155,11-13) : καὶ γὰρ ὅπως ἂν ἔχῃ πρὸς ἄλληλα τὰ ἐπιφαινόμενα ἑκάστῳ γνωρίσματα, οὕτως ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ τὰ ὑποκείμενα ἕξει (En effet, le rapport entre les caractéristiques manifestées par chacun se retrouve nécessairement entre les réalités sous-jacentes.)

23 Cf. *CE* III 6,66 (GNO II 209,21-24) : διῃρημένης τοίνυν τῆς τε κτιστῆς φύσεως καὶ τῆς θείας οὐσίας καὶ οὐδεμίαν ἐπιμιξίαν ἐχούσης κατὰ τὰς γνωριστικὰς ἰδιότητας.

24 Cf. *CE* III 6,67 (GNO II 209,27-28), citant Sg 7,18.

25 L'objection est posée au potentiel, cf. *CE* III 6,63 (GNO II 212,1) : ὡς διὰ τούτου δύνασθαι ἂν…, ce qui laisse supposer que Grégoire l'attribue à ses adversaires, procédé assez fréquent chez le Cappadocien, cf. *CE* I 508 ; *CE* III 1,21.113, III 2,42.

26 Grégoire évoque le cas des âmes humaines et des anges, marqués certes par un commencement mais non par une fin, cf. *CE* III 6,73 (GNO II 211,28) : εἰ δὲ ἀτελεύτητος καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἡ φύσις ; il pourrait en être alors ainsi pour le Fils. Grégoire, pour répondre à l'objection, s'appuie sur la distinction créé/incréé et sur le fait que la nature incréée possède la vie par essence, tandis que les réalités créées n'ont la vie que par participation. Ce désir de Grégoire de fonder spéculativement ses réflexions était souligné déjà par W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, 293 : « Es entspricht seiner Eigenart, möglichst alle Aussagen spekulativ zu unterbauen ».

Cette présentation rapide du cadre immédiat des deux exposés ontologiques *CE* I 270-271 et *CE* III 6,66 manifeste assez clairement, semble-t-il, l'importance des questions auxquelles est confronté Grégoire, puisqu'elles déterminent à chaque fois l'échelle des êtres adoptée par lui pour sa réfutation. Un troisième et rapide exemple permettra de s'en convaincre. Grégoire, en *CE* I 361s, consacre de longues pages au terme *plus ancien* (τὸ πρεσβύτερον) appliqué selon lui par Eunome au Fils[27]. Alors que Grégoire explique qu'un commencement du Fils impliquerait un commencement du Père, une objection lui est aussitôt faite : il est universellement reconnu que la création a commencé dans le temps, sans pour autant fixer de commencement au créateur ; ainsi est-il tout à fait possible d'envisager un commencement du Fils, qui n'impliquerait pas de commencement au Père[28]. Derrière cette objection se tient en fait un rapprochement du Fils avec la création et, finalement, le même problème de fond qu'en *CE* III 6 : le Fils est-il soumis à des intervalles temporels (χρονικὰ διαστήματα) ? Il est alors révélateur que Grégoire, confronté au même problème, réponde de façon identique et introduise une division des êtres semblable à celle de *CE* III 6,66, fondée uniquement sur la distinction κτιστόν/ἄκτιστον[29].

Dès lors, si Grégoire évoquait initialement en *CE* I 270-271 les deux distinctions sensible/intelligible et créé/incréé, pour ne retenir ensuite en *CE* III 6,66 que la seconde, un tel fait pourrait peut-être dépendre non pas tant d'une évolution que d'une adaptation de Grégoire aux problèmes à résoudre[30], si bien

27 La notion de plus ancien est énoncée par Eunome à propos des œuvres de la création, anges, étoiles, ciel et homme, cf. *CE* I 153 (GNO I 72,21-24), mais non explicitement à propos du Fils ou de l'Esprit.

28 L'objection faite à Grégoire est posée sous forme de dilemme : ou bien un commencement d'œuvre implique un commencement de l'agent, et alors la création doit être coéternelle au créateur, ou bien un commencement d'œuvre n'implique pas de commencement de l'agent, et alors le Fils peut très bien avoir un commencement d'existence, cf. *CE* I 359 (GNO I 133,13-15) : ὡς ἀκόλουθον εἶναι διὰ τούτου ἢ καὶ τὴν κτίσιν συναΐδιον τῷ θεῷ ἢ καὶ τὸν υἱὸν μεταγενέστερον ἀφόβως λέγειν.

29 Cf. *CE* I 361 (GNO I 133,28-29) : πάντων τῶν ὄντων τὸ μὲν διὰ τῆς κτίσεώς ἐστι, τὸ δὲ πρὸ τῆς κτίσεως (entre tous les êtres, les uns sont par création et les autres avant la création).

30 Cette mise en évidence de l'adaptation de Grégoire aux sujets qu'il traite pourrait rejoindre, d'une certaine manière, ce que J. Reynard écrivait dans Grégoire de Nysse, *Sur les Titres des Psaumes*, éd. et trad. J. Reynard, SC 466, Paris 2002, *Introduction*, 14 : « Il faut garder à l'esprit que l'œuvre conservée semble s'étendre sur un nombre relativement limité d'années, un vingtaine tout au plus, entre 370 et 390 – voire une dizaine, si l'on tient compte de sa période la plus productive qui débute vers 378 –, écrite par un homme d'une cinquantaine d'années (on pense qu'il est né vers 330), en pleine possession de ses moyens. Il est donc délicat de parler d'évolution et de progrès, d'autant que les différences

qu'une sorte de classification qui attribuerait la primauté de la distinction sensible/intelligible à un Grégoire « jeune » et celle de la distinction créé/incréé à un Grégoire « plus mûr » ne paraît pas concluante[31]. Ce constat permettrait alors de reconsidérer la question plus délicate et plus large de l'influence du platonisme sur Grégoire, puisque l'hypothèse d'une pensée de Grégoire marquée par le platonisme mais qui se christianiserait toujours plus ne paraît plus nécessaire[32], du moins ne saurait s'appuyer sur les distinctions ontologiques suprêmes proposées par Grégoire au fil de ses œuvres.

Faut-il alors exclure toute différence entre le *CE* I et le *CE* III pour ce qui concerne la distinction créé/incréé ? Le rapport à l'Écriture sur ce point précis se révèle particulièrement révélateur. Comme il vient d'être dit, Grégoire traite en *CE* I 361s et *CE* III 6,61s un même problème de fond, la soumission ou non du Fils monogène à des intervalles temporels. Dans les deux cas, Grégoire fait intervenir la distinction créé/incréé, mais cette distinction tient dans le *CE* I la première place et conduit à une démonstration, voire à une méditation philosophique, étonnamment longue[33], qui traite des différences entre la création diastématique et la divinité ἀδιαστάτως, et les recours à l'Écriture y sont rares[34]. Au contraire, la démonstration du *CE* III 6,61s s'appuie d'abord et avant tout sur les caractéristiques du Fils apprises de l'Écriture et inapplicables à la création, et ce n'est qu'après, et seulement après, que Grégoire évoque la distinction ontologique créé/incréé. L'Écriture, discrète en *CE* I 361s, prend ainsi la première place en *CE* III 6,61s.

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qu'on repère entre les ouvrages peuvent être largement dues à celles des genres auxquels ils appartiennent. »

31 Comme il a été vu, la distinction créé/incréé apparaît déjà seule et déterminante en *CE* I 361. Inversement, les deux distinctions sensible/intelligible et créé/incréé sont présentes dans le traité *in Canticum canticorum* VI (GNO VI 173, 7s), œuvre généralement datée des dernières années de Grégoire, c'est-à-dire après 391 si ce n'est après 394, cf. F. Dünzl, *Braut und Bräutigam. Die Auslegung des Canticum durch Gregor von Nyssa,* BGBE 32, Tübingen 1993, 30-33. Encore une fois, la présence de ces deux distinctions semble répondre à la question traitée par Grégoire, ici le progrès sans fin de l'âme ; Grégoire commence ses réflexions en distinguant le sensible de l'intelligible, puis introduit pour la nature intelligible la distinction créé/incréé, qui lui permet de justifier philosophiquement le progrès sans fin dans le bien des intelligibles créés.

32 Cf. les suggestions d'A. Meredith, supra n. 10-11.

33 *CE* I 362-375 (GNO I 134,8-137,19) : quatorze paragraphes !

34 Mention de Sg 7, 18 en *CE* I 365 (GNO I 135,5-6) ; *Col* 1, 17 en *CE* I 373 (GNO I 137,1-2) et *Ac* 17, 28 en *CE* I 373 (137,3).

Un second exemple pourrait confirmer ce fait. Comme il a été dit précédemment, Grégoire prend soin, dans le ch. XXIII du *CE* I, de fonder scripturairement la distinction créé/incréé énoncée au chapitre précédent, et cette partie scripturaire vise concrètement à démontrer que Fils et Esprit ne sont pas créés. C'est une problématique à peu près identique qui reparaît en *CE* III 1,7, où Grégoire répond à l'affirmation d'Eunome, selon laquelle le Fils peut être appelé *chose faite* (ποίημα) ou *chose créé* (κτίσμα). Cependant, alors que l'argumentation de Grégoire se développe dans le *CE* I en quelques paragraphes[35], celle-ci occupe presque la moitié du *CE* III 1[36], donnant lieu aux réflexions bien connues sur Pr 8, 22[37]. Les fondements scripturaires prennent ainsi dans le *CE* III des proportions considérables, et un tel constat ne saurait se limiter au *CE* III 1 ; de fait, il est possible, au fil de cette œuvre, de voir apparaître régulièrement de nouvelles preuves tirées de l'Écriture, soit pour montrer que le Fils n'est pas une créature[38], soit pour confirmer l'opposition entre Dieu et la création[39]. Il importe de souligner que cet accroissement des réflexions scripturaires chez Grégoire n'est pas uniquement tributaire du texte de son adversaire (Grégoire ne ferait que réfuter les appels à l'Écriture faits par Eunome)[40], comme le montrent assez clairement les longs passages consacrés

35 Huit paragraphes, *CE* I 296-303 (GNO I 114,1-116,14).

36 *CE* III 1,11-65 (GNO II 7,14-27,8).

37 Là encore, la comparaison entre le *CE* I et le *CE* III se révèle intéressante, car le raisonnement de Grégoire sur *Pr* 8,22, qui tenait dans le *CE* I en quelques lignes, cf. *CE* I 298-301 (GNO I 114,17-115,24), devient dans le *CE* III 1 un véritable « petit traité », selon l'expression de M. Van Parys, « Exégèse et théologie dans les livres Contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse. Textes scripturaires controversés et élaboration théologique », in : M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et Culture philosophique*, 169-196, ici 181.

38 Ainsi *CE* III 2,34-57 : en réponse à l'identification par Eunome de la nature du Fils à celles des créatures, Grégoire commence par rappeler abstraitement l'opposition divinité/créatures, cf. *CE* III 2,34-38 (GNO II 63,3-64,24), puis poursuit par un long examen scripturaire sur le Fils et les anges, cf. *CE* III 2,39-57 (GNO II 64,25-71,21), puis sur l'appellation de *premier-né*, sans équivalent dans le *CE* I. De même *CE* III 3,8-11 (GNO II 109,24-111,11), où Grégoire unit Is 44, 6 et Is 43, 10 afin de montrer que le Fils est Dieu, dans l'éternité du Principe.

39 Cf. *CE* III 5,29-31 (GNO II 170,12-171,16), où Grégoire en appelle au témoignage des prophètes (Is 66, 2, cité d'après Ac 7, 50) et des apôtres (1 Co 8, 6), pour montrer qu'il n'est pas absurde d'opposer la création à Dieu.

40 Cf. la longue réfutation scripturaire en *CE* III 3-4 consacrée à l'exégèse de Ac 2, 36 proposée par Eunome.

à Pr 8, 22 en *CE* III 1,21-65 et à He 1, 6 en *CE* III 2,43-57, qui ne paraissent pas répondre à une exégèse particulière d'Eunome[41].

Aussi, s'il a été vu précédemment que les différences entre le *CE* I et le *CE* III pour la distinction créé/incréé sembleraient dépendre principalement du problème à résoudre, il paraît cependant possible de discerner une différence dans l'approche de cette distinction par Grégoire, qui chercherait dans le *CE* III à appuyer davantage sur l'Écriture ce qu'il disait de manière plus spéculative dans le *CE* I. Faut-il y voir une évolution ? Peut-être ce fait révèle-t-il plutôt à l'échelle des *CE* I et III, de façon macroscopique donc, le tempérament propre du Cappadocien, qui, dans ses recherches particulières, ne sépare jamais ses investigations philosophiques de l'Écriture inspirée.

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41 Rien ne permet de dire avec certitude que les réflexions de Grégoire sur Pr 8, 22 répondent à des réflexions correspondantes d'Eunome, Grégoire semble au contraire vouloir traiter une question scripturaire agitée dès le début de la controverse dite arienne, cf. sur ce point les recherches de M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la Polémique*, t. 1, 319-321 ; il en est de même pour He 1, 6, cf. *id.*, 353-354.

The Philanthropic Economy of the Holy Spirit
Notes on *Contra Eunomium* III 6,32

Miguel Brugarolas

From the very beginnings of Christian thought, the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying and dispensing the grace of the redemptive action of Christ—of the economy of Incarnation—has been a subject of the greatest interest, coming to be one of the major issues in the overall panorama of the history of theology. On the basis of the statements in *John* 14,15–26 and *John* 15,26–16:15 about the sending, action and power of the Holy Spirit, Christian authors have reflected in considerable depth on the work of the Spirit in illuminating the intelligence and sanctifying the soul.

Particularly with Gregory of Nyssa, thought about the Holy Spirit and his action occupies a place of special importance, both theologically and historically.[1] His pneumatology probably represents one of the most mature fruits of his thought and one of his greatest contributions to the theology of the fourth century.

Gregory's book *Contra Eunomium* III is an essentially christological work, devoted primarily to responding to Eunomium's doctrine about the Logos and his generation. Therefore, in this book we do not find a direct discussion of the Holy Spirit as is found in some paragraphs of the *CE* I (§ 191–204, 278–281 and 305–316) and in many other works by Gregory of Nyssa. References to the Holy Spirit usually appear alongside the christological arguments and discussions, or in relation to Trinitarian propositions.[2]

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1 Cf. W. Jaeger, *Gregor von Nyssa's Lehre vom Heiligen Geist*, Leiden 1966, especially the chapter: "Gregors Lehre vom Hl. Geist in der Widerlegung des arianischen Glaubensbekenntnisses des Eunomios", 78–100; B. Duvick, "The Trinitarian Tracts of Gregory Nyssa", in: H. R. Drobner – A. Viciano (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Beatitudes. An English Version with Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the Eighth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Paderborn, 14–18 September 1998*), SVigChr 52, Leiden, Boston, Köln 2000, 581–592; L. F. Mateo-Seco, *Teología trinitaria. Dios Espíritu Santo,* Madrid 2005, 130–145; A. Meredith, "The Pneumatology of the Cappadocian Fathers and the Creed of Constantinople", *IthQ* 48 (1981), 196–211; G. Maspero, "Pneumatology", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 632–635.

2 Cf. E. Moutsoulas, "La pneumatologie du Contra Eunomium I", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – J. L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa, IV Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 381–390.

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None the less, in *CE* III 6,32 we find a beautiful text in which Gregory describes the action of the Holy Spirit in inspiring Scripture, and which reflects the *humanitas* which characterizes his *economic* divine action. Gregory's words are worthy of detailed study, since a profound theology of the Holy Spirit shines through their eloquence and simplicity.

Contra Eunomium III 6,32

Gregory begins this excerpt from book VI (*CE* III 6,27–49) by examining what the term generation (γέννησις) (6,27) means and how the different kinds of generation that we see in created beings (6,28–31) are: generation of matter and art, of matter and nature, of intellect and immaterial things, etc. Then he moves on to address specifically the question of the generation of the Son (6,36ff.). Yet, before that, he stops to consider succinctly the action of the Holy Spirit within the realm of the knowledge of divine realities, and consequently, in the way of understanding the generation in God (6,32–36). The text reads:

> These kinds of generation, therefore, being apparent to mankind, the kindly dispensation of the Holy Spirit (ἡ φιλάνθρωπος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία) conveys to us the divine mysteries, making accessible to us his teaching about things beyond our understanding. It does the same on other occasions, when it describes the Divinity physically, talking about eye, eyelids, ear, fingers, hand, right hand, arm, feet, sandals and the like in connexion with God; none of these can be understood in its literal sense of the divine nature, but by elevating the doctrine through words familiar in human speech towards what is easy to envisage, it outlines subjects beyond verbal description, as in a process of analogy we are raised up by each of the things said about God to a kind of superior understanding.[3]

In the first place, our attention is drawn to Gregory's way of referring to the action of the Holy Spirit: ἡ φιλάνθρωπος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία.[4] Here Gregory uses two notions—οἰκονομία and φιλανθρωπία—which are of

3 *CE* III 6,32 (GNO II 197; tr. Hall).

4 In our analysis of the expression: 1) φιλάνθρωπος -ον: is an adjective with two endings, which appears in the text as a nominative, feminine, singular which applies to ἡ οἰκονομία; 2) τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος: is a neutral noun in genitive singular, which serves as a complement of the substantive ἡ οἰκονομία, indicating ownership; 3) ἡ οἰκονομία: is a feminine noun in nominative singular, which is the subject on which the action (παραδιδοῦσα) rests. Therefore, ἡ φιλάνθρωπος οἰκονομία, is the subject of the sentence and could be translated as *the*

theological relevance in themselves and which take on particular importance in the framework of the controversy concerning Eunomius.

The notion of οἰκονομία had a broad and varied theological use among the Greek fathers;[5] it generally signified the "plan or 'dispensation' of God in the Incarnation."[6] Gregory of Nyssa uses the term abundantly both in its non-theological sens and in the theological sense proper.[7] From a theological point of view, the word οἰκονομία takes on a great variety of nuances and different meanings in his works.[8]

As J. R. Bouchet has pointed out, Gregory rarely uses the term οἰκονομία with an absolute meaning, but rather in conjunction with other ideas that define its meaning more exactly,[9] e.g.: "economy in favour of beings", "in our favour", "economy according to the flesh", "according to man", "economy of grace", "economy of the cosmos."[10] When Gregory uses οἰκονομία in the Christological

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philanthropic economy. This is modified by a genitive of ownership (τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος) indicating that the economy belongs to the Holy Spirit. In this way, a literal translation would be: *the philanthropic economy of the Holy Spirit*.

5 This is a frequent term in profane literature, on which the Pauline corpus sheds some important light (*Ep* 3,9; 3,2; 1,10; *Col* 1,25; *1 Tim* 1,4). Cf. B. Studer, "Economia", in: A. Di Berardino (ed.), *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità cristiane*, Milano 2006, 1540.

6 Cf. J. H. Srawley, *The catechetical oration of Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge 1956, 20 n. 2.

7 Only in their theological uses, the terms οἰκονομία, οἰκονομεῖν and οἰκονόμος appear over 250 times in Gregory's work, cf. G. Maspero, "Οἰκονομία", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 537–543.

8 The *Lexicon Gregorianum* bears witness to the wide-ranging use of the term *oikonomía* and show the main ways in which it is used (cf. F. Mann, "οἰκονομία", in: *Lexicon Gregorianum*, VI, Leiden, Boston 2007, 698–704). Among the authors, H.R. Drobner, commenting on *Trid. spat.* (GNO IX 274,10–21), defined *oikonomía* as "dem seit Ewigkeit geordneten Heilsplan, der im AT beginnt, seinen Höhepunkt in der Erlösung und seinen Endpunkt in der Vergottung des Menchen hat" (cf. H. R. Drobner, *Die drei Tage zwischen Tod und Auferstehung unseres Herrn Jesus Christus*, Philosophia Patrum 5, Leiden 1982, 50). See also: G. Maspero, *Θεολογία, οἰκονομία e ἱστορία: La teologia della storia di Gregorio di Nissa* (dissertation *pro manuscripto*), Pamplona 2003, 97–300; J. Rexer, *Die Festtheologie Gregors von Nyssa*, Patrologia 8, Frankfurt 2002, 262–272; B. Studer, "Theologia—Oikonomia", *StAns* 124 (1997), 575–600; M. Canévet, "Nature du mal et économie du salut chez Grégoire de Nysse", *RSR* 56 (1968) 87–95.

9 J.-R. Bouchet, "Remarques sur le sens du mot οἰκονομία dans la langue de Grégoire de Nysse", in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 195–196.

10 In the *Or. cat.* we can see the variety of expressions and meanings in Gregory's use of the term *oikonomía*, cf. J. H. Srawley, *The catechetical oration*, 20, n. 2; 58, n. 13–14; 80, n. 13; 92, n. 11; 119, n. 7; 128, n. 1; 133, n. 7 and 14. On the notion of *oikonomía* in the *Oratio catechetica*:

area, he talks of the "economy of the passion", or "economy according to the flesh", and seems to be referring exclusively to the life of Jesus Christ on earth.[11]

In the text of *CE* III 6,32, which is the object of our present study, Gregory writes of the "economy of the Spirit" and, in particular, of his philanthropic economy, referring to the action by which the Spirit transmits the realities of God to us in human words (words adapted to the human being), through the inspiration of Scripture. Gregory's way of understanding this suggests an interesting association of ideas: the Word's economy of love for men lies in his Incarnation, in becoming human, in making himself our equal;[12] and the Holy Spirit's economy of love for men lies in his action of transmitting the divine realities in human words, in "making divine language human"[13] so that we can have divine thoughts about the mystery of the only-begotten Son.[14]

The concept of 'philanthropy' has two meanings for Gregory. On the one hand, it refers to the virtue of loving others, particularly, the poor.[15] On the other hand—and this is the fundamental meaning—it is a divine

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R. J. Kees, *Die Lehre von der Oikonomia Gottes in der Oratio Catechetica Gregors von Nyssa*, Leiden 1995, especially 91–197.

11 For Athanasius in his dispute with the Arians, *oikonomía* always refers to the saving action of the incarnate Word. This meaning, which already predominates in Origen, has antecedents in Ignatius of Antioch and Justin. Cf. B. Studer, "Economia", in: A. Di Berardino (ed.), *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità cristiana*, Milano 2006, 1540–1541.

12 Gregory often expresses the idea that φιλανθρωπία is the reason of the Incarnation; a particularly beautiful instance is *Cant.* XIV (GNO VI 427,13). Commenting on the parable of the Good Samaritan, Gregory says that "The Word explained, in narrative form (*Lk* 10,25–29), his whole economy of love for humanity [...] He is the one who made himself our neighbour through his love for men, who was born of Judah and became one of our family (Cf. *Heb* 7,14)" (Καὶ τίς ἐστί μου πλησίον; τότε ἐν διηγήματος εἴδει πᾶσαν τὴν φιλάνθρωπον οἰκονομίαν ὁ λόγος ἐκτίθεται,[...] ὁ τοίνυν πλησίον ἡμῶν γεγονὼς διὰ τῆς τοιαύτης φιλανθρωπίας, ὁ διὰ τοῦ ἐξ Ἰούδα ἡμῖν ἀνατεῖλαι ἀδελφιδὸς γενόμενος οὗτός ἐστιν)". On this point, Gregory follows the patristic tradition which sees the Good Samaritan as a synthesis of the history of salvation. Cf. Ireneus, *Adv. Haer.* 3,11,3; Origen, *Hom. in Lucam* 34,4 (GCS IX 190-191).

13 M. Canévet comments on *CE* III 6,32: "If analogy is possible through words, it is because the Holy Spirit himself gives us something of God through the Scripture; He founded and instituted analogy", cf. M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique. Étude des rapports entre le langage et la connaissance de Dieu*, Études augustiniennes—série Antiquité 99, Paris 1983, 55.

14 Cf. *CE* III 6,39 (GNO II 200).

15 On *philanthropía* as a Christian virtue among the Cappadocians, see: B. E. Daley, "Building a New City. The Cappadocian Fathers and the Rhetoric of Philantropy", *JECS* 7 (1999) 431-461, en especial 437–458.

attribute, God is φιλάνθρωπος;[16] and his *humanitas*, his "love for men" (cf. *Tit* 3,4), is the cause of the Incarnation[17] and the reason for the οἰκονομία.[18] Gregory's words in *Cant IV* are particularly expressive, when he says that: "ἡ φιλανθρωπία is your name."[19] There is therefore nothing strange about applying this attribute to the Holy Spirit as well, and to his intervention in the economy.

Φιλανθρωπία as a divine attribute also plays an important role in Gregory's argument with Eunomius.[20] The latter interprets the incarnation as a sign of the Son's inferiority to the Father, stating that the Son's acting "for love of men" (*philanthropic*) shows his inferiority to the Father.[21] Gregory, however, states that φιλανθρωπία is proper to the Father, who sends the Son and is united to Him (*John* 8,29). He is the source of all good, and in his "*humanitas*" He shows his omnipotence.[22] As W. Völker states, the divine φιλανθρωπία is the deepest reason for the Incarnation and the only perspective from which it is possible to understand properly the whole work of salvation.[23]

In this way, when Gregory uses the term *philanthropic economy* to describe the action by which the Holy Spirit elevates human language to the divine plane and inspires Scripture, he situates the Spirit together with the Father and the Son, both in their divine "*humanitas*" and in their effective contribution to the economy of salvation. The Three of the Trinity possess a single, unique love for human beings, which is the basis for the economy of salvation that they also carry out together in communion.[24] The Father is the one who, for love of humankind, sends his Son to the world, the Son performs the Redemption

16 In patristic theology, φιλανθρωπία belongs to God in the strictest sense. As Cyril of Jerusalem says, God is "perfect in φιλανθρωπία" (τέλειος ἐν φιλανθρωπίᾳ), *Catechesis* VI 8 (PG 33, 552). Cf. J. I. Ruiz Aldaz, "La recepción del concepto de *philanthropía* en la literatura cristiana de los dos primeros siglos", *ScrTh* 42 (2010) 277–308, here 278.

17 Cf. J. H. Srawley, *The catechetical oration*, 63, n. 8.

18 Cf. *CE* III 4,31-32 (GNO II 146,9–22); cf. G. Maspero, "φιλανθρωπία", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 595–600, here 597.

19 Cf. *Cant.* IV (GNO VI 107,4).

20 Cf. G. Maspero, "φιλανθρωπία", 596.

21 Cf. *CE* III 10,36 (GNO II 303).

22 Cf. J. H. Srawley, *The catechetical oration*, 91, n. 4.; L. F. Mateo-Seco comments: "In the 'divine economy'—in the work of creation and Redemption—God's omnipotence (δύναμις) and His love of man (φιλανθρωπία) are clearly united", L. F. Mateo-Seco, "La mariología en San Gregorio de Nisa", *ScrTh* 10 (1978) 409–466, here 413, n. 8.

23 Cf. W. Völker, "Zur Gotteslehre Gregors von Nyssa", *VigChr* 9 (1955) 103–128, here 123.

24 This conception is in harmony with Gregory's idea of the Holy Spirit's role in the consummation of history. See: *Pent.* (GNO X/II 289); *CE* III 2,45ff. (GNO II 67ff.), *CE* III 4,13 (GNO II 138,21). Cf. E. Cavalcanti, "Teologia trinitaria e teologia della storia in alcuni testi di Gregorio di Nisa", *Aug.* 16 (1976) 117–124, here 119.

in the flesh, and the Holy Spirit in his "philanthropic economy" helps us with his grace so that we can speak properly about God and attain knowledge of his truth.

In these texts, Gregory is not thinking of the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when he writes about the "economy of love for men", but rather he is referring to the action and power of the Holy Spirit as the inspiration of Scripture and illumination of the intelligence. He is telling us that the Holy Spirit is a great pedagogue, a divine pedagogue. A similar framework of ideas in which Gregory moves has been described by Basil in his homily *De pace*, in which, speaking of the Holy Spirit, he asserts that "He is sent economically and He acts by his own power",[25] as He is the divine light that is completely with God and completely inhabits those whom He sanctifies.

On the other hand, these words take on a particular interest in the development of *Eun* III. In this work, the subject of the economy of the Son has an ever-constant presence from the beginning till the end. Gregory speaks frequently throughout his whole argument about the divine Logos of the *divine philanthropy*, with the aim of understanding the economy of the Incarnation, the work of salvation accomplished by the Son. It is striking how amid numerous references to the action of the Son as an economy of love for men,[26] Gregory decides at this time to speak about the action, not of the Son but of the Holy Spirit, using precisely the same term—*the philanthropic economy*—and not others.

Furthermore, the fact that we did not find this phrase, in our own research on the writings of other authors such as Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius or Origen,[27] leads us to think that we are looking at a phrase of Gregory's own. Among his works, the same expression appears on three other occasions besides the text being studied:[28] the *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* 91[29] (as W. Jaeger noted, this is the same text as the *CE* III 6,32, which has been

25 Basil, *Hom 15 De fide* (PG 31, 472A).

26 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* III 2,55; 3,30; 3,34; 4,9f.; 4,32; 4,35; 4,51 (GNO II 70; 118f.; 136f.; 146f.; 153).

27 Our research was aided by the following database: *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), CD-ROM E (1992).

28 These are the only texts in which Gregory talks of "the economy of the Holy Spirit" apart from *Epist.* 2,19 (GNO VIII 2) in which Gregory uses the word "οἰκονομέω" to refer to the giving of the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in the form of tongues of fire, and a paragraph in *Eust.* (GNO III/1 12,11–13,10) in which Gregory writes of the "economy" which is common to the three persons of the Trinity. The texts cited here are those quoted by *Lexicon gregorianum* (cf. F. Mann, "οἰκονομία" 698,63–699,24).

29 Cf. *Ref.* 91 (GNO II 349); Ph. Schaff – H. Wace, *A select library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, II, V, 114; C. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa, Teologia Trinitaria*, Milano 1994, 614.

transferred with minor modifications) the *In sanctum Stephanum* I 1,4,[30] and the *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum* II 15,76.[31]

To better appreciate Gregory's description of the action of the Spirit, it may be useful to read the texts *CE* III 6,32 and *Ref Eun* 91 together.

***CE* III 6,32**	***Ref Eun* 91**
Τούτων τοίνυν τῶν τῆς γεννήσεως τρόπων φανερῶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὄντων	Τούτων τοίνυν τῶν τῆς γεννήσεως τρόπων οὕτως ἡμῖν διῃρημένων, καιρὸς ἂν εἴη κατιδεῖν,
ἡ φιλάνθρωπος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία παραδιδοῦσα	πῶς ἡ φιλάνθρωπος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία παραδιδοῦσα
ἡμῖν τὰ θεῖα μυστήρια διὰ τῶν ἡμῖν χωρητῶν τὴν διδασκαλίαν ποιεῖται τῶν ὑπὲρ λόγον,	τὰ θεῖα μυστήρια διὰ τῶν ἡμῖν χωρητῶν τὴν διδασκαλίαν ποιεῖται τῶν ὑπὲρ λόγον.
ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασι τοῦτο ποιεῖ, ὅταν σωματικῶς διαγράφῃ τὸ θεῖον, ὀφθαλμὸν καὶ βλέφαρα καὶ οὖς καὶ δακτύλους καὶ χεῖρα καὶ δεξιὰν καὶ βραχίονα καὶ πόδας καὶ ὑποδήματα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα περὶ θεοῦ διεξιοῦσα, ὧν οὐδὲν κατὰ τὴν πρόχειρον ἔννοιαν ἐν τῇ θείᾳ καταλαμβάνεται φύσει, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ ἡμῖν εὐσύνοπτον τὴν διδασκαλίαν ἀνάλουσα ταῖς τετριμμέναις ἐν τῇ συνηθείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων φωναῖς τὰ ὑτὲρ πᾶσαν σημασίαν πράγματα διορίζει, ἀναλογικῶς ἡμῶν δι' ἑκάστου τῶν περὶ θεοῦ λεγομένων πρός τινα ἀναγομένων ὑψελοτέραν ὑπόνοιαν.	πάντα γὰρ τὰ τῆς γεννήσεως εἴδη, ὅσα ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη γινώσκει διάνοια, ἡ θεόπνευστος διδασκαλία πρὸς τὴν παράστασιν τῆς ἀρρήτου δινάμεως παραλαμβάνει, οὐ συμπαραδεχομένη τὰς σωματικὰς τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐμαφάσεις.

30 Cf. *Steph.* I 1,4 (GNO X 1 78); O. Lendle, *Gregor von Nyssa, Encomium in sanctum Stephanum Protomartyrem*, Leiden 1968, 8–10.

31 Cf. *Inscr.* II 15,76 (GNO V 160–161); J. Reynard, *Grégoire de Nysse. Sur les titres des Psaumes*, Paris 2002 (SC 466, 477).

The structure of Gregory's argument is as follows: *The philanthropic economy of the Holy Spirit* (ἡ φιλάνθρωπος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία) teaches us the things beyond our understanding (τῶν ὑπὲρ λόγον), conveys to us the divine mysteries (τὰ θεῖα μυστήρια) through words that are known to us (διὰ τῶν ἡμῖν χωρητῶν). The Holy Spirit in his love for humankind uses human descriptions to refer to God and to allow us the knowledge of the truth about Him. It is a clear affirmation of the divine action in men's intellect as light, or enlightenment, which raises human faculties to the knowledge of God's truth.[32] The Holy Spirit carries out his saving action for the love of men, "by elevating the doctrine through words familiar in human speech towards what is easy to envisage" (*CE* III 6,32). He is the Spirit who by descending[33] to the humility of what is human, that which is comprehensible to us ("to come down to the low level of our competence", says the text) allows us to ascend to a higher knowledge of that which transcends our natural capacity. Thanks to the *philanthropic economy of the Holy Spirit* we are able to approach and speak of Him who is superior to the human word and thought,[34] whose ineffable majesty is not contained by anything.[35]

The reader's attention is also drawn in this text to the mention that Gregory makes of analogy,[36] as a way to access higher knowledge about God ("as in a process of analogy we are raised up by each of the things said about God

32 During the Colloquium A. Radde-Gallwitz had noticed that in the quoted texts, Gregory ascribes to the Holy Spirit the sanctification and the instruction of men, but he keep silent about his role in creation, more or less as Eunomius' does in the Apologia (Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 69, 24–26): "He [the Paraclete] is honoured in third place as the first and greatest work of all, the only such 'thing made' of the Only-begotten, lacking indeed godhead and the power of creation, but filled with the power of sanctification and instruction"). In my opinion, Gregory, at this point, is not thinking directly about refuting Eunomius' statements, but extracting the deep meaning of the action of the Holy Spirit and his particular role in the divine economy. In any case, the hard conviction of Gregory, in continuity with Athanasius and Basil, that only God can sanctify, is clear. In this sense, when he affirms that holiness is a fruit of the Spirit's action he is also asserting his divine nature. Nevertheless, Gregory also refers in other texts to the action of the Holy Spirit in creation, e.g.: *Maced.* (GNO III/1, 98–100), *CE* I 314-315 (GNO I 120), *CE* II 236 (GNO I 295), *Ref.* 101,1–13 (GNO II 354), *Or. cat.* 4,4–11 (GNO III/4, 14).

33 See *CE* III 6,35 and *Ref.* 92: πρὸς τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς ἡμετήρας δυνάμεως καταβῆναι.

34 Cf. *CE* III 1,105 (GNO II 39).

35 Cf. *CE* III 1,42; 3,37 (GNO II 18; 120).

36 An issue that appears also in *CE* I 213 (GNO I 88); *CE* II 224 (GNO I 291); *Infant.* (GNO III/2, 83; 85); *Or. cat.* 2,1 (GNO III/4, 12; cf. R. Winling, *Grégoire de Nysse, Discours Catéchétique*, SC 453, Paris 2000, 152f., nt. 2). About this concept see W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, 29; 184.

to a kind of superior understanding", *CE* III 6,32). However, addressing this question would require a much broader study and distract us from the real issue that concerns us now. What Gregory is certainly affirming here, apart from the issue of analogy, is the question, rooted in the Gospel of St. John, about the important role played by the Holy Spirit in our knowledge of God.

On the other hand, by reading the two texts in which Gregory uses the term ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία it is possible to see how the action of the Spirit in the salvation of men is not limited to the epistemological dimension, to the intellect, but also promotes the sanctification of men's hearts and lives. Thus in his commentary on Psalm 57, Gregory says that it is also "the economy of the Holy Spirit" that transmits the examples of the saints in the Scripture so that we can keep them in our memory,[37] and so that by their example we may be guided and obtain for ourselves the same good:

> For, in my opinion, the goal of the economy of the Holy Spirit is to set forth the previous accomplishments of holy men for guidance for the life after these accomplishments, the representation leading us forward to good which is equal and similar [...] when one has looked up at this stela which the Holy Spirit set up for David, and has read the word on it which David uttered on behalf of him who was eager for his own blood [Saul],[38] he will not fail to calm the troubled thoughts in his soul, and appease his passion by this desire to imitate the same things.[39]

It is interesting to highlight how Gregory uses the same expression, this time to describe an action of the Holy Spirit distinct from what we saw in earlier texts. Somehow, Gregory is conveying the same idea as in the *CE* but from the standpoint of not the knowledge of God, but the holiness or sanctification effected within men by the Spirit. It is *the economy of the Holy Spirit* which, on the one hand, presents to us the example of the saints, being conserved in the

37 Cf. *Inscr.* II 15,76 (GNO V 160–161); J. Reynard, *Grégoire de Nysse, Sur les titres*, 476–477.

38 Cf. 1 *Sm* 19,9–11; 26,9.

39 *Inscr.* II 15,76 (GNO V 160–161); R. H. Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, Oxford 1995, 201; J. Reynard, *Grégoire de Nysse, Sur les titres*, 477: "Πρὸς τοῦτο γὰρ οἶμαι τὴν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομίαν ὁρᾶν, ὥστε τὰ προλαβόντα τῶν ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν. κατορθώματα εἰς ὁδηγίαν προκεῖσθαι τῷ μετὰ ταῦτα βίῳ, πρὸς τὸ ἴσον τε καὶ ὅμοιον ἀγαθὸν προαγούσης ἡμᾶς τῆς μιμήσεως [...] ἣν τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα τῷ Δαβὶδ ἀνεστήσατο, καὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ φωνὴν ἀναγνούς, ἣν ὁ Δαβὶδ ὑπὲρ τοῦ φονῶντος ἐφθέγξατο, καταστορέσει πάντως τὴν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τῶν λογισμῶν ταραχήν, πόθῳ τῆς τῶν ὁμοίων μιμήσεως καταπραΰνων τὸ πάθος".

Scripture,[40] to guide us in the way to our own holiness, and on the other hand, instils in our heart a desire to imitate them. Thus, by imitating the examples proposed to us by the Holy Spirit, we come to achieve the same good as the saints.[41] Therefore, according to Gregory's text, the action of the Holy Spirit in us is not limited to facilitating access to truth by way of knowledge, but beyond that, his richness reaches the hearts of men by filling them with effective desires for holiness.

Finally, there is one more text in which the expression that has been studied appears. It is a beautiful passage in which Gregory of Nyssa describes the action of the Holy Spirit in the context of the spiritual building of the Church, which took place at Pentecost. Because we cannot avail ourselves of an English translation, we quote the Greek version:

> ἔδει γὰρ τοὺς ἐπὶ τῇ γηΐνῃ πυργοποιΐᾳ τὴν ὁμοφωνίαν λύσαντας ἐπὶ τῇ πνευματικῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας οἰκοδομῇ πάλιν εἰς ὁμοφωνίαν ἐλθεῖν. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καλῶς ἐντεῦθεν ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία τῆς χάριτος ἄρχεται, ὥστε τὴν κοινὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐεργεσίαν εἰς πασᾶν διαφορὰν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης καταμερίσαι φωνῆς, ἵνα μὴ μιᾷ γλώσσῃ μόνῃ τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐναποκλειόμενον ἄπρακτον τοῖς ἀλλογλώσσοις μένῃ καὶ ἀνενέργητον.[42]

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40 He uses the example of David who has been praised by the Holy Spirit in Scripture (cf. J. Reynard, *op. cit.*, SC 466, 477). It could also be seen here—as in previous quotations—that the Spirit's action, and in this sense, the economy, also passes through the inspiration of Scripture. As M. Harl said commenting on *CE* III 6,32: "Il y a une *économie philanthropique* du saint Esprit qui a organisé le langage biblique, avec les mots correspondant à l'expérience et aux habitudes humaines, de telle façon que ce langage, purifié et transposé, puise servir à établir des concepts dignes de Dieu" (M. Harl, "A propos d'un passage du *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire de Nysse: ἀπόρροια et les titres du Christ en théologie trinitaire", *RSR* 55 (1967) 217–226, here 221). The same may be seen in relation to the expression of the text we saw earlier: *Ref Eun* 91: ἡ θεόπνευστος διδασκαλία.

41 We can find another expression of a similar idea in *Or. Dom.* I (GNO VII/2, 15,6–10).

42 *Steph.* I 1,4 (GNO X/1, 77–78): "The same one that broke the communion of language in the construction of the tower of the land, returned to the unity of language in the spiritual building of the Church. The economy of the Holy Spirit rightly makes this the starting point of its grace, so that for the benefit of the community of men in all the different languages spread among men, he does not enclose the proclamation of the faith in a single language, remaining useless and ineffective for those who speak another language (cf. *Act* 2,6)". Gregory is commenting on the "miracle" of glossolalia described in *Acts* 2,9–13 contrasting the unity of the intelligence with the confusion of Babel. In this context, Laurentius Sifanus translates the text we are analysing: "Oportebat enim eos, qui in terrenae turris exstructione communionem linguae, vocisque concordiam solverant, in spirituali Ecclesiae aedificatione rursus ad commercium linguae venire, atque idcirco

One can find here the expression ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οἰκονομία, "the economy of the Holy Spirit", referring to the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the proclamation of faith.[43] In the economy of grace, the Holy Spirit makes universal the proclamation of faith by overcoming all human limitations, surpassing the limits of every language and giving one efficacy and one diffusion to the proclamation of the Gospel, which does not exclude anyone.

It has been seen, at first, how Gregory describes the action of the Holy Spirit according to the elevation of the cognitive faculties of man to attain the knowledge of the divine mysteries. At a second stage, it was found that the participation of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation transcends the scope of knowledge and leads men to holiness through the example of the saints, by bestowing on us the inspired teachings and the desire to imitate the saints' lives, which is thus planted in men's hearts. Finally, we see here how the same Spirit in his economy of grace edifies the Church spiritually and assists her in the announcement of the *kerygma*, overcoming the human limits and assuring her gratuitous efficacy.

Conclusion

If, as J. H. Srawley says, one of the contributions of Gregory of Nyssa to Christian thought is his way of addressing the relationship between the work of redemption and God's attributes, his power, his righteousness, his goodness and wisdom,[44] we are not mistaken in perceiving the same relationship in this expression of *the economy of the Holy Spirit*. There is one divine economy wherein the power and righteousness of the Spirit are not separated from his love and wisdom: the Spirit is free, active, always chooses the good, and has adequate power in his will.[45] Therefore it seems that one potentially interesting research direction, in continuation of this study, may be to investigate the attributes that Gregory of Nyssa gives to the Holy Spirit, both in the *Contra Eunomium* and in his small Trinitarian treatises, in relation to their participation in the sole salvific action of God. In this way, it could be recognized how all

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sancti Spiritus dispensatio recte gratiam hinc orditur, ut commune hominum beneficium in omnem intellectum humanae vocis dispertiretur, ne si in unam linguam solam praedicatio pietatis inclueretur, inefficax et inutilis hominibus diversae linguae maneret" (PG 46, 706A).

43 Cf. *CE* III 6,39 (GNO II 199).

44 Cf. J. H. Srawley, *The catechetical oration*, xxxii.

45 Cf. *Or. cat.* II 3 (GNO III/4, 13).

that is said about the Holy Spirit in the texts that we have studied constitutes an evocative complement to the pneumatological statements that Gregory makes in other works.

What scope and importance should be given to the οἰκονομία τοῦ πνεύματος throughout the thought of Gregory of Nyssa? There have already been some attempts to answer this question in a maximalist or minimalist way but it seems that in any case prudence is necessary in our interpretation of its role.

The Holy Spirit's economic action and his *humanitas* is certainly an issue that Gregory does not address systematically or exhaustively; it may be reasonable to think that it is not the result of a careful speculative commitment. Gregory may not be trying to offer, by using this expression, a particularly thoughtful, pondered or sophisticated notion. Rather, it may be an idea that emerges from Gregory's pen as a spontaneous fruit of his deep theological convictions and his profound understanding of the Trinitarian mystery. Precisely the fact of finding statements such as the one discussed in works that do not revolve around the theme of the Holy Spirit allows us to glimpse the deep importance that pneumatological issues may have in the thinking of Gregory of Nyssa.

Challenging the Heretic: The Preface of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* III

Alessandro Capone

In the letter to his brother Peter, written between the summer of 380 and the first months of 381,[1] as it is well-known, Gregory supplies some information regarding the writing of the *Contra Eunomium* (hereinafter *CE*): the short time he disposed of Eunomius' text only allowed him to answer the first book and the insults against Basil moved him at times to reply. Nevertheless, there is another point on which Gregory dwells and which is interesting for the present enquiry: *If the first part of the discourse* (τὰ πρῶτα τοῦ λόγου) *seems somewhat outside the controversy* (ἐξαγώνια), *such an arrangement of the discourse will, I think, be approved by one who judges carefully… Besides, if anyone reasons about it accurately, the pages are also part of the controversy* (ταῦτα μέρη τῶν ἀγώνων ἐστίν).[2] Without tackling the question whether Gregory refers only to the first or also to the second book of *CE*, it is interesting to point out that he defines his work as a contest, according to a terminology that, as it will be seen, is not at all alien to him. In fact, in *Epistle* 15, again about *CE*, he writes to John and Maximian: *But if any part of the treatise appears worthy of the ear of the sophist, choose certain passages, especially those before the debates* (τὰ πρὸ τῶν ἀγώνων μάλιστα)*, and take to him specimens of choice style* (ὅσα τῆς λεκτικῆς ἐστιν ἰδέας).[3]

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1 On the dating of the *Epistle* 29 see G. Pasquali, *Gregorii Nysseni Epistulae*, GNO VIII/2, Leiden 1959, 87.

2 G. Nys. *Ep*. 29,7f. (tr. A. Silvas).

3 *Ep*. 15,4. Pasquali ("Le lettere di Gregorio di Nissa", *SIFC* 3 (1923) 75–136, here 111) conjectured ἐπιλεκτικῆς for ἐπιλεκτῆς of the ms. Maraval (*Grégoire de Nysse: Lettres*, SC 363, Paris 1990, 210), on whose text the translation of A. Silvas is based, accepts instead the conjecture of Müller (λεκτικῆς), which now seems preferable, considering the historical background. The dating of the *Epist*. 15 is not sure; nevertheless the remarks of R. Criscuolo seem solid (*Gregorio di Nissa. Lettere*, Quaderni di Κοινωνία 6, Napoli 1981, 39). Unlike Pasquali, he considers it most probable that Gregory refers to the first two books of *CE* and his proposal is to date the letter to the end of 381. According to A. Silvas (*Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, SVigChr 83, Leiden-Boston 2007, 158) the letter can be dated to 382 or to the spring of 383. Here it is not possible to tackle the problem of the dating of the letter and so we restrict ourselves only to the following remarks: 1) Gregory refers to the parts which precede the theological debate; if we do not understand the expression as having a general meaning, it could be correct to think of

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The starting point for the present enquiry is the definition of *CE* as debate and contest with an enemy (ἀγών), as proposed by the Nyssen. Such terminology is also confirmed in every way by the examination of the preface of the second (but not of the first!)[4] and of the third book of *CE*, that is of the sections which precede the theological debate, but which, to use the words of Gregory, have to be considered integral parts of the work. Given this shiny awareness by Gregory, one needs to examine the preface of *CE* III with the aim of shedding light on the characteristics of the fight carried out by the Nyssen, the movements of defence and attack, and finally those points considered by the opponents to be either strong or weak. A comparison of this passage with the rest of the author's production and an analysis of some important sources helps to bring to light a stratified and articulated substratum, in which context it will be possible to place and better understand the preface of *CE* III.

1 The Rules of the Fight

The exordium of *CE* III introduces the atmosphere of the fight (ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι) between Gregory and Eunomius in an exemplary way:

> Εἰ τῷ νομίμως ἀθλοῦντι τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι πόνων ὅρος ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ παντελῶς ἀπειπόντα πρὸς τοὺς πόνους τὸν ἀνταγωνιστὴν ἑκουσίως ἐκστῆναι τῷ κεκρατηκότι τῆς νίκης ἢ τρισὶ πτώμασι κατὰ τὸν ἀθλητικὸν καταβληθῆναι νόμον, δι' ὧν γίνεται τῷ νενικηκότι τῇ κρίσει τῶν βραβευόντων ἡ ἐπὶ τῷ στεφάνῳ δόξα διὰ λαμπροῦ τοῦ κηρύγματος . . .
>
> For the athlete who competes in the regular way at the games, it is the rule that either the opponent refuses altogether to go on and voluntarily

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the prefaces of the 1st, of the 2nd and maybe even of the 3rd book of *CE* 2) Pasquali referred Gregory's words only to the 1st book of *CE*, in which introduction there is an invective against the heretic, on the basis of his conjecture (ἐπιλέγειν τινί = *obtrectare alicui*), which is disputed, as it has been seen. Therefore the text of the passage should be examined more accurately and, in the light of lexical remarks exposed in this study (*CE* is defined as a debate), such an analysis should be able to give useful elements to clarify the dating of the letter itself.

4 The preface of *CE* I is structured mainly on the image of the heresy as illness: cf. *ex. gr. CE* I 1, Οὐδὲ τὸ τοῖς ἀνίατα νοσοῦσι τὴν τῶν πολλῶν φαρμάκων προσαπολλύειν παρασκευὴν ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς ὠφελείας σκοπῷ φέρει τι τῆς σπουδῆς ἄξιον; *CE* I 2, Οἵ τε γὰρ νοσώδεις καὶ ἤδη πρὸς θάνατον ἕτοιμοι τοῖς δραστικωτέροις τῶν φαρμάκων εὐκόλως προσδιαφθείρονται; *CE* I 4, Οὗτος γὰρ τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι τῆς κατὰ ψυχὴν ἀρρωστίας . . . ἐκεῖνον δὲ μόνον πρὸς τὴν ἐγχείρησιν τῆς θεραπείας ἐκίνησε τὸν μόνον ἐν τῷ περιττεύοντι τῆς φιλανθρωπίας καὶ τοῖς ἀμηχάνοις ἐπιτολμῶντα πρὸς ἴασιν. Only afterwards, as it will be seen (*CE* I 111ss), Gregory will turn to the metaphor of wrestling.

> concedes victory to the winner, or else he is thrown three times in accordance with the rules of the competition, and thus on the verdict of the umpires the winner receives by triumphal proclamation the honour of the crown.[5]

In the image of the athlete who struggles in accordance with the rules scholars usually find an echo of *2 Tim* 2,5 (ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀθλῇ τις, οὐ στεφανοῦται ἐὰν μὴ νομίμως ἀθλήσῃ).[6] But, on closer inspection, the relationship with the *New Testament* passage seems rather weak,[7] because the image of the athlete and of the struggle is created by the Nyssen in a more complex way than in *2 Tim* 2,5; furthermore, it has to be seen from the "agonistic" view, which deeply marks the structure of *CE*, as it will be seen.[8]

Now, the image of the athlete and of the struggle in accordance with the rules (νομίμως) can be found at least in other three passages in the writings of the Nyssen:

> Οὐκ ἔστι στεφανωθῆναί τινα τὸν μὴ νομίμως ἀθλήσαντα· οὐκ ἂν δὲ γένοιτο νόμιμος ἄθλησις μὴ ὄντος τοῦ προσπαλαίοντος. Εἰ οὖν μὴ ἦν ὁ ἀντίπαλος, οὐδ'

5 *CE* III 1,1 (tr. S. G. Hall).

6 The adjective νόμιμος means "conformable to custom, to law" and as such occurs only once in the LXX (2 *Macc* 4,11). In *New Testament* it occurs only as an adverb (νομίμως) in *1 Tim* 1,8 and *2 Tim* 2,5, where, placed into the metaphor of fighting, means "according to the rules of wrestling": see W. Gutbrod, *s. v.* νόμιμος, in *Gr. Less. N. T.* VII, trad. it., Brescia 1971, col. 1412f.

7 There is a very interesting passage of Epictetus (*Diatr.* III 10,6–8), in which philosophy is compared with pankration. But there is also a difference: in this combat it is possible to avoid the blows, while in life ceasing of philosophize does not entail any benefit, for the troubles of life are precisely those things for which the philosopher practices and exercises himself (ἕνεκα τούτου ἐγυμναζόμην, ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἤσκουν). Therefore God asks him to show that he wrestled according to the rules, he ate what he needed, and he practiced and listened to the gymnasium trainer (δός μοι ἀπόδειξιν εἰ νομίμως ἤθλησας, εἰ ἐφαγες ὅσα δεῖ, εἰ ἐγυμνάσθης, εἰ τοῦ ἀλείπτου ἤκουσας). Therefore, it seems plain that the phrase "competing in accordance with the rules" belongs to the Greek agonistic tradition and that it could easily be used with a metaphorical meaning (cf. *ex. gr.* Phil. *Praem. poen.* 409,5 Οἱ μὲν ἀθληταὶ τῷ ὄντι ἀρετῆς ἀνευρίσκοντο μὴ ψεύσαντες τῆς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς χρηστῆς ἐλπίδος τοὺς ἀλείπτας νόμους), as Paul's letter itself testifies. But see also J. Leemans, "God and Christ as Agonothetae in the Writings of Gregory of Nyssa", *SE* 43 (2004) 5–31.

8 A satisfactory interpretation concerning the problem of the structure of the *CE* has not yet been found: see *Eunomius. The extant works*, by R. P. Vaggione, Oxford 1987, 92f; M. Cassin, "Contre Eunome III: L'exégèse structure-t-elle l'argumentation?", in: M. Cassin et H. Grelier (ed.), *Grégoire de Nysse: La Bible dans la construction de son discours*, Études Augustiniennes, série Antiquité 184, Paris 2008, 72ff; Id., "Réfuter sans lasser le lecteur: pratique de la réfutation dans le Contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse" *StPatr* 68 (2010) 71–76.

ἂν ὁ στέφανος ἦν· νίκη γὰρ καθ' ἑαυτὴν οὐκ ἔστιν, ἐὰν μὴ ᾖ τὸ ἡττώμενον. Οὐκοῦν πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ τρεπτὸν τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀγωνισώμεθα, οἷόν τινι ἀντιπάλῳ διὰ τῶν λογισμῶν συμπλεκόμενοι.[9]

. . . [ἐλαίου] ὃ τοῦ φωτὸς γίνεται ὕλη καὶ καμάτων λυτήριον καὶ πόνων ἄνεσις καὶ κεφαλῆς φαιδρότης καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγώνας τοῖς νομίμως ἀθλοῦσι συνέργεια.[10]

Δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι ὅσα τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη ἐστίν, τοσαῦτα κρατήματα τῶν ἐχθρῶν γίνεται καθ' ἡμῶν καὶ παλαίσματα, δι' ὧν καθάπερ τι μέλος τῆς ψυχῆς ὁ λογισμὸς ἐξαρθροῦται πολλάκις καὶ ἐξαρμόζεται, εἰ μή τις παρεσκευασμένος διὰ μελέτης τὸ ἀσφαλές τε καὶ ἀκατάπτωτον ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἀγῶσιν ἑαυτῷ κατορθώσειε διὰ τῆς νομίμου ἀθλήσεως, καθώς φησιν ἀπόστολος, τὴν νίκην ἑαυτῷ κατακτώμενος, ἥτις ἐστὶν τῶν ἀγώνων τὸ τέλος.[11]

Taking a comprehensive view, it seems clear that Gregory is not particularly interested in the *New Testament* passage, which moreover, as we know, he does not quote expressly except in *Inscr.* (II 2).[12] Furthermore, in these three passages the image of the fight is somehow turned inwards, i.e. used now to indicate the struggle of every man with his own unstable nature, now to explain the symbol of the oil, which has an useful effect on the athletes' bodies, now to warn about the passions against the rational part of the soul which can prevail thanks to exercise and following the rules. In short, Gregory seems well informed about the practices and the rules of the fight and he knows the usefulness of oil,[13] as well as the technical terms about wrestling.[14]

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9 *Perf.* 213,7–13. In the apparatus the editor refers to *2 Tim* 2,5 as does W. Woods Callahan in her translation.

10 *Cant.* 9 (274,10ff); in the apparatus the editor does not refer, as it seems correct, to *2 Tim* 2,5.

11 *Inscr.* II 2 (73,17–24); in the apparatus the editor refers to *2 Tim* 2,5 and so also R. E. Heine in his translation.

12 On the presence of the *Second Letter to Timotheus* in the writings of the Nyssen see M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 221f (where Gregory's interest in metaphors, particularly that of running, has been highlighted).

13 See M. B. Poliakoff, *Studies in the Terminology of the Greek Combat Sports*, Frankfurt am M. 1986, 8. Pseudo-Dionysius of Halicarnassus (259 U.-R.) suggests to the orator some ideas about the wreath of olive leaves; among others, that it is a cure for troubles (ἄκος πόνων) and is the most appropriate tree for those who compete (οἰκειότατον τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις), as the gymnastic exercises are performed thanks to the use of olive oil (τὰ γὰρ γυμνάσια διὰ τοῦ ἐλαίου διαπονεῖται); see the note *ad l.* in *Pseudo-Dionigi di Alicarnasso. I discorsi per le feste e per i giochi*, a c. di A. Manieri, Roma 2005, 130.

14 The present study points out terms of the agonistic lexicon; Gregory uses them at times with a concrete and at time with a metaphorical meaning. On the festivals and gymnasia

But, let us turn to the preface of *CE* III, in which, unlike the other passages, the opponent is a named individual man. Before his third and decisive reply, Gregory presents two possibilities for finishing the challenge: his rival can either renounce wrestling and step back in front of the winner or, after being thrown for the third time, can be declared defeated.[15] These are actually two possible ends of a struggle. The regulations of wrestling, in fact, provide that a wrestler was winner after the overthrowing of the opponent three times:[16] the verb used by Gregory (καταβληθῆναι) is technical (κατὰ τὸν ἀθλητικὸν νόμον), as for example Pausanias' evidence shows about the wrestler Leontiscus, who was skilled in overthrowing (καταβαλεῖν) his rivals.[17] Immediately afterwards, in fact, Gregory again uses the same verb, this time with a clear reference to Eunomius, who, *though twice overthrown in the previous books* (δὶς ἤδη καταβληθεὶς ἐν τοῖς προλαβοῦσι λόγοις)*, still does not concede victory to the truth over the lie.*[18] Gregory also addresses Apollinaris with a similar expression: πῶς ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τοῖς ἐναντίοις καταβάλλεται πτώμασιν![19]

Now, the greatest expectation for a wrestler was victory ἀπτώς or ἀπτωτί, i.e. when the winner defeated the opponent without being ever thrown; and it is just this, at least in the first instance, which is Gregory's hope. This kind of ending would have had without any doubt a remarkable moral and doctrinal significance, by showing the clear superiority of Gregory. However, the new

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in Asia Minor during the Late Antiquity see Z. Newby, *Greek Athletics in the Roman World*, Oxford 2005, 229–271.

15 On κρατέω as a wrestling term cf. Pind. *Ol.* 8,19f Ἔργῳ τ' οὐ κατὰ εἶδος ἐλέγχων / ἐξένεπε κρατέων / πάλᾳ δολιχήρετμον Αἴγιναν πάτραν; Philostr. *Gymn* 3 Ἐκράτει δὲ ἁπάντων πάλῃ; 14 Παλαισμάτων εἴδη ὁπόσα ἐστί, δηλώσει ὁ παιδοτρίβης καιρούς τε ὑποτιθέμενος καὶ ὁρμὰς καὶ μέτρα καὶ ὅπως ἄν τις ἢ φυλάττοιτο ἢ φυλαττομένου κρατοίη.

16 See R. Patrucco, *Lo sport nella Grecia antica*, Firenze 1972, 296ff; M. B. Poliakoff, *Combat sports in the ancient world*, New Haven, London 1987, p. 23ff.

17 Cf. Paus. VI 4,3 and also Ps.-Liban. 8,493,3ff F. (about the wrestling between Heracles and Antaeus) Καὶ συμπλεκομένους εἶδεν ὁ πρότερος χρόνος οὓς ἀγωνιζομένους κατέσχεν ἡ τέχνη . . . τὼ δὲ δὴ χεῖρε πρὸς τὸν Ἀνταῖον ἔχει συμπλέξας καὶ πιέζει λαβὼν καὶ καταβαλεῖν ἀπειλεῖ. Cf. also Plut. *Quaest. conv.* II 4,638d Ἡ γὰρ πάλη μοι δοκεῖ τῷ παλεύειν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ δολοῦν καὶ καταβάλλειν δι' ἀπάτης, κεκλῆσθαι; *Per.* 8,5 "Ὅταν" εἶπεν "ἐγὼ καταβάλω παλαίων, ἐκεῖνος ἀντιλέγων ὡς οὐ πέπτωκε, νικᾷ καὶ μεταπείθει τοὺς ὁρῶντας"; Sen. *Benef.* V 3 *Luctator ter abiectus perdidit palmam, non tradidit.* The use of the metaphor of the third fall already occurs in Plato's *Euthydemus* (277d), when Socrates describes a critical point in a contest: Euthydemus was proceeding to press the youthful Cleinias for the third fall, as if it were a wrestling match (ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον καταβαλῶν ὥσπερ πάλαισμα). Cf. also Aristoph. *Ach.* 274f and *Pax* 896b: see R. Campagner, *Lessico agonistico di Aristofane*, Roma, Pisa 2001, 177f.

18 G. Nys., *CE* III 1.

19 *Antirrh.* 35,65.

attack of Eunomius forces the Nyssen to undertake a new work, to engage in a third competition; which makes clear the opponent's foolishness, shallowness and lack of shrewdness.

> ... ἐπεὶ οὖν δὶς ἤδη καταβληθεὶς ἐν τοῖς προλαβοῦσι λόγοις Εὐνόμιος οὔπω συγχωρεῖ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ κατὰ τοῦ ψεύδους ἔχειν τὰ νικητήρια, ἀλλ' ἐκ τρίτου πάλιν κατὰ τῆς εὐσεβείας διὰ τῆς λογογραφίας κονίζεται ἐν τῇ συνήθει παλαίστρᾳ τοῦ ψεύδους εἰς τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀπάτης ἀγῶνας ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιρρώσας, ἀναγκαίως καὶ νῦν δι' ἡμῶν ὁ τῆς ἀληθείας λόγος πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ψεύδους ἀνατροπὴν ἀντεγείρεται, τῷ νικοποιῷ τε καὶ ἀγωνοθέτῃ τῆς νίκης ἀναθεὶς τὰς ἐλπίδας καὶ ἅμα τῇ κακοτεχνίᾳ τῶν τοῦ ἐναντίου παλαισμάτων ἐνδυναμούμενος.
>
> So, since Eunomius, though twice overthrown in the previous books, still does not concede victory to the truth over the lie, but yet again for the third time stirs up conflict against true religion with his book-writing, and exercises himself in his familiar gymnasium of the lie for his battles for falsehood, the word of truth must now again rise up through us to defeat the lie, the word which rests its hopes of winning upon the Giver of victory and Marshal of the games, and is at the same time encouraged by its opponent's poor wrestling technique.[20]

With a view to the third attack Eunomius exercises himself in the palaestra of the lie which is familiar to him. Also in this situation Gregory evidently gets his terminology from an agonistic lexicon. Κονίζω, in fact, is a verb peculiar to wrestling and indicates the act of covering the body with dust, which preceded the struggle in the palaestra.[21] Lucian informs us that the athletes sprinkled themselves with dust to be less slippery in the hand-to-hand struggle. Furthermore, the dust repels the sweat, protects the body from the wind, keeps dirt off and makes the skin more glossy.[22] It is clear, therefore, that the competition for which Eunomius prepares himself will be a hand-to-hand struggle, a wrestling

20 *CE* III 1,1.

21 The palaestra consisted of an open-pit area with a part of the surface covered with sand or dust (κονιστήριον), whereas in the gymnasium there was a part with muddy ground: see Patrucco, *Lo sport*, 327ff; Poliakoff, *Combat sports*, 12f; *Luciano. Anacarsi o sull'atletica*, a c. di P. Angeli Bernardini, Pordenone 1995, 61; Campagner, *Lessico*, 248–251.

22 Cf. Luc. *Anac*. 29. Cf. also Philostr. *Gymn*. 18 Κονίσασθαι παλαίστρᾳ τὸν ἀθλητὴν ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ καὶ ἡλιούσθαι ἀνάγκη and 56 Κόνις δὲ ἡ μὲν πηλώδης ἱκανὴ ἀπορρύψαι καὶ ξυμμετρίαν δοῦναι τοῖς περιττοῖς: see J. Jünther, *Philostratos. Über Gymnastik*, Leipzig, Berlin 1909 (= Amsterdam 1969), 230f and 303f.

bout in favour of the falsehood, in which Gregory will have to give the best of his ability.

At this point it is timely to recall another passage of *CE* I, in which the Nyssen turned to the image of struggle with which to depict the attacks of the opponent. In the face of Eunomius who claims to have defeated Basil with his apology,[23] Gregory acknowledges that Eunomius fought (ἠγωνίσθαι) with great intensity and vigour in this wicked competition of impiety (τὸν πονηρὸν τοῦτον ἀγῶνα τῆς ἀσεβείας). Nevertheless, although Eunomius was superior to his comrades, he did not gain a victory over his opponents (οὐχὶ κατὰ τῶν ἀντιτεταγμένων ἐσχηκέναι τὰ νικητήρια).[24] In comparison with his rivals he was ahead of all in the abundance of falsehood, was the best of all who in a similar way fought against the truth (πάντων τῶν ἐπὶ τοῖς ὁμοίοις κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας κονισαμένων) and as reward for his silliness he received election as bishop of Cyzicus by those who in this way award prizes in the competitions (παρὰ τῶν οὕτως ἀγωνοθετούντων).[25]

A comparison of these two passages reveals two points: 1) the return of the image of wrestling, expressed with almost the same words, shows that it runs

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23 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* I 111f.

24 On νικητήρια, which occurs also in just quoted *CE* III 1,1, cf. *Steph.* I (85,17–19) Ἀκούω καὶ ἐν τοῖς γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσι τοὺς πλεονεκτοῦντας κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν πρὸς ὅλον πολλάκις ἀποδυομένους τὸ γύμνικον στάδιον κατὰ πάντων φέρεσθαι τῶν ἀντιπάλων τὰ νικητήρια and Poll. *Onom.* III 143 Καὶ τὰ μὲν ὀνομαζόμενα ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἔπαθλα ἆθλα καλοῖτ' ἂν κοινῶς ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν καὶ νικητήρια καὶ ἐπίχειρα.

25 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* I 113. To understand Nyssen's preference for the image of wrestling, it is important to consider a passage of the *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus* (19,20–20,7), where the saint is described as an athlete (καθάπερ τις ἀθλητής) who, having acquired the experience and power to face the contests (πρὸς τοὺς ἄθλους), enters the stadium and fights with his oppontents (πρὸς τοὺς ἀντιπάλους κονίζεται); so, having fortifed his spirit in the same way as athletes who sprinkle their bodies with oil (τὴν ψυχὴν ἀλειψάμενος), the saint takes part in the wrestling bouts (ἀντιλαμβάνεται τῶν ἀγώνων). In fact, Gregory observes, it is necessary to speak of wrestling and competition (ἀγῶνας καὶ ἄθλους) regarding his priestly life, in which he defeated the enemy's total power with faith (τὴν τοῦ ἀντικειμένου κατηγωνίσατο δύναμιν). On the election of Eunomius as bishop of Cyzicus in Mysia cf. Bas. *CE* I 2; Philost. *HE* V 3; Socrat. *HE* IV 7; Sozom. *HE* IV 25,6; Theodoret. *HE* II 27,21; 29,2 and see R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene revolution*, Oxford 2000, 229ff; P. R. Amidon, *Philostorgius: Church History*, Leiden, Boston 2007, 77. After the Council of Constantinople, in which he defended Aetius, Eunomius managed to replace Eleusius on the bishop's seat of Cyzicus. Moreover, he achieved the total rehabilitation of Aetius regarding the accusations which Basil of Ancyra and Eustathius of Sebaste had early cast at him. The awarding of Cyzicus, according to Eunomius, should show the victory of his *Apologia*. Gregory's answer tries to display that the success of an impious man does not imply that he is in the right and his ideas are correct.

through all three books of *CE* and so must be from the beginning the rhetorical strategy by which Gregory meant to contradict the opponent. In this sense the exordium of *CE* II is emblematic: *Our first disputes with Eunomius were with God's help adequately dealt with in our previous efforts* (τὰ μὲν δὴ πρῶτα τῶν πρὸς Εὐνόμιον ἀγώνων ἱκανῶς ἤδη κατὰ θείαν συμμαχίαν ἐν τοῖς φθάσασι διήνυσται πόνοις).[26] Now Gregory is preparing himself for the second contest (τοῖς δευτέροις τῶν ἀγώνων),[27] just as David against Goliath, without fearing to grapple with him (συμπλακείς).[28] 2) Furthermore, the previously quoted passage of *CE* I allows with all probability to ascribe the use of the wrestling image first of all to Eunomius. In fact Gregory quotes accurately the syllogism with which Eunomius claims that the victory of his Aetius' apology was acknowledged: *For if, he says, the prize is the token and fulfilment of victory, and victory indicates the verdict, and the verdict certainly implies the accusation, then the one who awards the prize will be saying that of necessity the defence must exist.*[29] But the paraphrase with which Gregory introduces just the syllogism is clearer: Eunomius claims that *it is conceded by us that he both made his defence and won the action through his defence and through the trials he gained the prize of the victory.*[30] Therefore not only all *CE* is built as a struggle with the opponent that gradually found a greater and greater rhetorical coding, but also the metaphor itself, having, as it seems, its basis in Eunomius' writing,[31] proves Gregory's firm will to fight at the same level and with the same weapons as his rival.[32]

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26 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* II 1.

27 Cf. *CE* II 2. Cf. also *CE* II 9 Καὶ νῦν πρὸς τοὺς δεύτερους τῶν ἀγώνων οὐκ ἀναδύνομαι; *CE* II 10 ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀγώνων.

28 Cf. *CE* II 4. On the verb συμπλέκω cf. Poll., *Onom.* III 149 Οἱ δὲ παλαισταὶ βαρεῖς, στάσιμοι . . . ἀντερειδόμενοι, συμπλεκόμενοι and see M. B. Poliakoff, *Studies*, 75–87; *Lexicon gregorianum*, bearb. von F. Mann, Band VIII, Leiden-Boston 2010, 284 (B 2).

29 *CE* I 112 Εἰ γὰρ τὸ ἆθλον, φησί, νίκης ἐστὶ γνώρισμα καὶ τέλος, μηνύει δὲ τὴν δίκην ἡ νίκη, συνεισάγει δὲ πάντως ἑαυτῇ τὴν κατηγορίαν ἡ δίκη, ὁ τὸ ἆθλον διδοὺς ἀναγκαίαν εἶναι φήσει καὶ τὴν ἀπολογίαν.

30 *CE* I 112 Συνομολογεῖσθαι παρ' ἡμῶν φησι τὸ καὶ ἀπολελογῆσθαι καὶ νικῆσαι διὰ τῆς ἀπολογίας καὶ τὸ ἐκ τῆς νίκης ἆθλον διὰ τῶν ἀγώνων κομίσασθαι.

31 Cf. Eun., *Apol.* 27,34–40 Ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐνδόξων πλῆθος ἑνὸς πένητος εὐσεβοῦς οὐκ ἀντάξιον εἰς παραίτησιν παρ' ἀλήθειᾳ δοκιμαζούσῃ, συναγωνιζομένης μὲν εὐσεβείας κατὰ δικαίαν ἀμοιβὴν τῶν νῦν δι' αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ θανεῖν κέρδος ἡγουμένων, ἀποδιδόντος δὲ τὰ τῶν ἀγώνων ἆθλα τοῦ πάλαι καὶ νῦν ἀθλοθετοῦντος Χριστοῦ, τοῖς μὲν ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας πονέσασι τὴν ἀληθινὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ βασιλείαν οὐρανῶν, τοῖς δὲ διὰ κακόνοιαν ταύτην ἀτιμάσασι τιμωρίας ἀπαραιτήτους.

32 This seems more plausible if we consider what Gregory writes in the just quoted letter to his brother Peter (*Epist.* 29,8f): *Our opponent's discourse has two distinct aims* (σκοπούς)*: to insult us* (τὰς καθ' ἡμῶν διαβολάς) *and to controvert* (τὴν κατηγορίαν) *sound doctrine, and it was necessary that our discourse also range itself* (ἀντιταχθῆναι) *on both fronts. But for the sake of clarity, and in order that the thread of the enquiries on matters of doctrine should*

2 A Discourse without Rhetoric

Gregory presents Eunomius who prepares the third attack as a logographos who *yet again for the third time stirs up conflict against true religion with his book-writing* (διὰ τῆς λογογραφίας).[33] The word, which recurs in the Nyssen's work with reference to both Eunomius and Apollinaris,[34] has a clear negative meaning. To understand its significance, we have to consider one of the first pages of *CE* I. After having explained that he has been forced to reply against Eunomius for the good of the Church and that in the struggle he does not aim at a battle of discourses or an exercise in declamation (εἰς λόγων ἅμιλλαν ἢ ῥημάτων ἐπίδειξιν),[35] Gregory accuses Eunomius of being a wordy hack (τρίβωνα λόγων),[36] for the time spent on his doctrine and for the effort employed in his work. The proof of it, according to Gregory, is that his opponent used a large part of his life to write his discourses (ἔκ τε τοῦ προσαναλῶσθαι τῇ λογογραφίᾳ ταύτῃ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ συγγραφέως οὐκ ἐλάχιστον μέρος) and that his admirers applaud his works excessively (καὶ ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ πᾶσαν ὑπερβολὴν τοὺς ἐραστὰς αὐτοῦ τοῖς πεπονημένοις ἀγγάλλεσθαι).[37]

Before returning to this passage, it is timely first to examine, amongst other things, two occurrences of the word λογογραφία in Gregory's polemic with the bishop of Cyzicus. In *CE* II Gregory suspends his confutation for a moment to consider which is the most effective method to oppose him. He fears that all that Eunomius produced with his hazy writing is just like *lumps of slime and jelly-fish* (δέδοικα μὴ πάντα ἡμῖν ἐπίσης τὰ ἐκ τῆς λογογραφίας τοῦ Εὐνομίου

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not be chopped up by parentheses of answers to his accusations (τὰς παρ' αὐτοῦ διαβολάς) *we have perforce divided our treatment in two parts. In the first part we have devoted ourselves to refuting the charges leveled against us* (περὶ τὴν ἀπολογίαν τῶν ἐπιφερομένων ἡμῖν ἠσχολήθημεν). *After that we have grappled as best we could with what he has said against the doctrine. Our discourse contains not only a rebuttal* (ἀνατροπήν) *of their heretical views, but also an instruction and an exposition of our doctrines.*

33 G. Nys., *CE* III 1,1.

34 See *Lexicon gregorianum*, bearb. von F. Mann, Band VI, Leiden-Boston 2007, 105.

35 *CE* I 11. About the phrase ἅμιλλα λόγων (cf. *Med.* 546) D. J. Mastronarde (*Euripides. Medea*, Cambridge 2002, 262) writes that "this quasi-metatheatrical acknowledgment by the character of nature of the debate scene is found in other Euripidean *agōn*-scenes" (*Heracl.* 116; *Hipp.* 971; *Supp.* 427s; *Andr.* 234; *Her.* 1255).

36 *CE* I 12. Another Euripidean quotation: *Bacchae* 717.

37 Cf. *CE* I 11f and see J. L. Illanes Maestre, "Sophística y verdad en el exordio del 'Contra Eunomio' ", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – J. L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomio I" en la produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 2008, 237–245.

προκείμενα φλέγματά τινα ᾗ καὶ θαλάσσιοι πνεύμομες).[38] As smoke or fog thickens and muddies the air (καπνὸς ἢ ὀμίχλη βαθύει μὲν καὶ ἀναθολοῖ τὴν ἀέρα) and prevents one from seeing, but at the same time they do not condense enough to be seized and to be held and also offer resistance to those who strike (δράξασθαι τὸν βουλόμενον καὶ περισχεῖν ταῖς παλάμαις καὶ ἀντιτυπῆσαι τῷ πλήττοντι), so it would be possible to define this grandiose writing of Eunomius (τῆς σεμνῆς ταύτης λογογραφίας).[39] Finally, one should note that Peter himself, bishop of Sebaste, answering his brother's covering letter of *CE*, defines the opponent's writing as κενῇ λογογραφία.[40] Therefore Eunomius' books are hazy, difficult to grasp, shallow, and in consequence unreliable.

Now, to understand how the bishop of Cyzicus produces and stokes his hazy words, we have to turn to the just quoted passage of *CE* I. The many years employed by Eunomius to write his books show the vulgarity of the configurations in which he puts words together (ἡ περὶ τὰ σχήματα κατὰ τὴν τῶν ῥημάτων συνθήκην ἀπειροκαλία), his excessive and vain diligence in such

38 Cf. *CE* II 338. This phrase indicates something which is inconsistent; cf. also Plat. *Phil.* 21c Ζῆν δὲ οὐκ ἀνθρώπου βίον, ἀλλά τινος πλεύμονος ἢ τῶν ὅσα θαλάττια μετ' ὀστρεΐνων ἔμψυκά ἐστι σωμάτων.

39 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* II 338.

40 Cf. *Epist.* 30,3. The use of the word λογογραφία with negative and polemic sense is very ancient in the Greek tradition: Socrates (Plat., *Phaedr.* 257e–258b) says that *the politicians who have the highest opinion of themselves are most in love with speech-writing and with leaving compositions behind them* (μάλιστα ἐρῶσι λογογραφίας τε καὶ καταλείψεως συγγραμμάτων), *to judge at any rate from the fact that whenever they write a speech, they are so pleased with those who commend it that they add in at the beginning the names of those who commend them on each occasion. The writer says perhaps 'it was resolved by the council', or 'by the people', or both, and 'so and so said', referring to his own dear self with great pomposity and self-eulogy* (τὸ αὐτὸν δὴ λέγων μάλα σεμνῶς καὶ ἐγκομιάζων ὁ συγγραφεύς)*; then he proceeds with what he has to say, demonstrating his own wisdom* (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σοφίαν) *to those commending him, sometimes making a very long composition of it* (ἐνίοτε πάνυ μακρὸν ποιησάμεος σύγγραμμα). *If it stays written down, the author leaves the theatre delighted; but if it is rubbed out and he loses the chance of being a speech-writer and of being recognized as writer* (ἄμοιρος γένηται λογογραφίας τε καὶ τοῦ ἄξιος εἶναι συγγράφειν)*, he and his friends go into mourning* (trans. C. J. Rowe). Cfr. also Plat. *Phaedr.* 257e Διὰ πάσης τῆς λοιδορίας ἐκάλει λογογράφον; Demosth. *Fal. leg.* 246 Λογογράφους τοίνυν καὶ σοφιστὰς καλῶν τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ ὑβρίζειν πειρώμενος, αὐτὸς ἐξελεγχθήσεται τούτοις ὢν ἔνοχος: other passages in LSJ *s. v.* λογογράφος. See also J. Hesk, "The rhetoric of anti-rhetoric in Athenian oratory", in: S. Goldhill – R. Osborne (eds.), *Performance culture and Athenian democracy*, Cambridge 1999, 215f.

things (τὸ περιττόν τε καὶ μάταιον τῆς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα σπουδῆς),[41] the borrowing of a lot of small words from certain books (πολὺν γάρ τινα συρφετὸν λεξειδίων ἔκ τινων βιβλίων ἐρανισάμενος),[42] the laborious heaping up of an immeasurable number of words on few ideas (ἐπ' ὀλίγοις τοῖς νοηθεῖσιν ἀμέτρητόν τινα σωρείαν ῥημάτων φιλοπόνως συμφορήσας): all this is the most laborious fatigue (πολύκμητον),[43] which the disciples of falsehood—those who do not discern what is beautiful from what is not—praise and admire.[44] Therefore, all the polemic of Gregory takes place on the rhetorical level, as it is clearer when he compares Eunomius with those who on the stage excite wonder using parallelisms, isocolia, words similar in sound and ending, and reproduce in speech the sound of cymbals by the rhythm of small words like castanets (ὥσπερ τις τῶν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς θαυματοποιούντων διὰ παραλλήλων καὶ ἰσοκώλων ὁμοιοφώνων τε καὶ ὁμοιοκαταλήκτων ῥημάτων οἷόν τισι κροτάλοις τῷ τῶν λεξειδίων ῥυθμῷ διακυμβαλίζων τὸν λόγον): such are the modulations of their prefaces, idle and weak Sotadean verses (τὰ ἐν προοιμίοις αὐτοῦ τερετίσματα, τὰ βλακώδη ταῦτα καὶ παρατεθρυμμένα σωτάδεια),[45] which cannot be recited in a composed way, but by stamping feet, clicking fingers and singing in time.[46]

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41 Cf. Greg. Nyss., *CE* I 13.

42 Cf. *CE* I 14. In his apparatus (26) Jaeger observes: *Atticistarum lexica intellige*. Cf. Iul. *C. Eracl.* 218 C Μορφοῦται γάρ πως καὶ σχηματίζεται παρὰ τῶν μὴ προφερομένων εἰκῇ μηδ' ὥσπερ χειμάρρους ἑλκόντων συρφετοὺς ῥημάτων ἐκ τῆς τριόδου. On Atticism see G. Kennedy, *The art of persuasion in Greece*, Princeton 1963, 330ff.

43 This is a term occurring in Homer (*Il.* VI 48; XI 379; XII 133; *Od.* IV 718), as Jaeger noted, which with the other literary quotations brings out the emptiness of the Eunomius' work: see Gregorio *di Nissa. Teologia trinitaria*, a c. di C. Moreschini, Milano 1994, 142.

44 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* I 13f.

45 Sotadean verses were considered limp and obscene, but easily sung: see B. Gentili – L. Lomiento, *Metrics and Rhythmics. History of Poetic Forms in Ancient Greece*, Pisa, Roma 2008, 177 and also M. Bettini, "A proposito dei versi sotadei, greci e romani: con alcuni capitoli di analisi metrica lineare", *Mat. Disc. Anal. Test. Cl.* 9 (1982) 59–105. Also Arius' *Thalia* was written in Sotadean metre, with the aim of giving a large circulation to the doctrines there exposed, and therefore was often criticized: see W. J. W. Koster, "De Arii et Eunomii sotadeis", *Mnemosyne* 16 (1963) 135–141; D. Wyss, "La Thalia di Ario", *Dioniso* 37 (1963) 241–254; A. Pardini, "Citazioni letterali della "Thaleia" in Atanasio, Ar. 1,5–6", *Orpheus* 12 (1991) 411–428; R. Pretagostini, "Sotade e i *Sotadea* tramandati da Stobeo", in: *La letteratura pseudoepigrafa nella cultura greca e romana*, Napoli 2000, 275–289.

46 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* I 16f. Jaeger notes the criticism against the Asianic style and refers to Theon (*Progymn.* 71 Patillon), who disapproves of the use of metric and rhythmic expressions which occur among other in the Asianic orators. On Asianism see U. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Asianismus und Atticismus", *Hermes* 35 (1900) 1–52 and G. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion*, 301ff. On the μέτρον as term of the rhetorical polemic, see C. Crimi,

Above, it is easier to understand Gregory's declaration that he had not prepared a rhetorical speech for the struggle:

> Ὁμολογοῦμεν γὰρ ἀνεπιασχύντως ἡμεῖς μήτε τινὰ λόγον διὰ ῥητορικῆς τεθηγμένον ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας παρεσκευάσθαι μήτε δεινότητα διαληκτικῆς ἀγχινοίας εἰς συμμαχίαν κατὰ τῶν ἀντιτεταγμένων προβάλλεσθαι, ἢ καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν πολλάκις εἰς ὑπόνοιαν ψεύδους ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπείρων ἀντιμεθίστησιν.
>
> We are not ashamed to confess that we have neither prepared a case sharpened with rhetoric for the combat, nor offered cunning dialectical logic-chopping to help us against the opposition, something which for the inexperienced often exposes even truth to the suspicion of falsehood.[47]

In this situation too, the words used by Gregory for the rhetorical profession are pregnant and recall a web of literary allusions. Beyond the agonistic lexicon (ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας παρεσκευάσθαι, προβάλλεσθαι),[48] repeatedly present in the preface, the phrase λόγος τεθηγμένος brings to mind the τεθηγμένους λόγους mentioned by Oceanus in *Prometheus*.[49] Moreover, Gregory uses the same verb to warn the faithful against Apollinaris' new doctrine which is a mouth ready to bite with sharp teeth (τὸ στόμα τεθηγμένον τοῖς τῆς καινοτομίας ὀδοῦσι).[50] If on the one hand the Nyssen professes not to use rhetoric as a sharp weapon, evidently in contrast with the practices of his opponent, on the other hand he declares that he renounces cunning dialectical logic-chopping too. These are

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"Il problema delle 'false quantities' di Gregorio Nazianzeno alla luce della tradizione manoscritta di un carme: I,2,10 de virtute", *Sic. Gymn.* n. s. 25/1 (1972), 1–26, 23; Id., "Nazianzenica XVIII. Le donne di Massimo il Cinico", *Sileno* 38 (2012), 265–271, 269ff.

47 *CE* III 1,2. Cf. *CE* II 4 Ἀλλ' εὗρεν ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου ποίμνης αὐτοσχεδίους πολεμιστὰς τοὺς μήτε μαθόντας λογομαχεῖν μήτε ζημίαν τὸ μὴ μεμαθηκέναι νομίζοντας ἰδιωτικόν τε καὶ ἀγροικίζοντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας κατ' αὐτοῦ σφενδονήσαντας; II 9 Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὴν πρώτην τοῦ λόγου μάχην εὐθαρσῶς ὑπέστην, ἐκ τοῦ ποιμενικοῦ καδδίου, τουτέστιν ἐκ τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν δογμάτων, τοὺς ἀκατασκεύους τούτους καὶ αὐτοφυεῖς λόγους εἰς ἀνατροπὴν τῆς βλασφημίας ἀφεὶς καὶ οὐδεμιᾶς τῆς ἐκ τῶν ἔξωθεν λόγων ὁπλίσεως ἐπὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα προσδεηθείς, καὶ νῦν πρὸς τοὺς δευτέρους τῶν ἀγώνων οὐκ ἀναδύομαι.

48 Προβολή indicates one of the first moments of the combat in the pankration, wrestling and boxing, i.e. the initial inclination of the athlete who searches for the best movement: see Patrucco, *Lo sport*, 313; Poliakoff, *Studies*, 167.

49 Cf. Aeschyl., *Prom.* 311: Oceanus invites Promethaeus to know himself (γίγνωσκε σαυτόν) and to change attitude, for he will throw strong and sharp words (τραχεῖς καὶ τεθηγμένους λόγους ῥίψεις) and there is a risk that Zeus hears them; cf. also Aeschyl. *Sept.* 715.

50 Cf. G. Nys., *Antirrh.* 133.

notions peculiar to rhetorical treatises. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in fact, criticizes the style of Iphicrates, because he gives proof not of rhetorical sharpness (ῥητορικὴν ἀγχίνοιαν), but of military arrogance and bragging.[51] A short time later, he states that Lysias' style is not biting (πικρόν), vehement (δεινόν) and terrible (φοβερόν). Now, δεινότης was characteristic of the style which above all was appropriated to debate and the verbal agon of which Demosthenes was considered the leading exponent.[52] Finally the Nyssen states that he renounces the dialectical cleverness which Eunomius' writing oozed with. To give a few examples on this subject:[53] in *CE* II Gregory says that his discourse receives confirmation from every point of view, though it has not been technically constructed according to the forms of dialectic (εἰ καὶ μὴ τεχνικῶς κατὰ σχήματα τῆς διαλεκτικῆς);[54] again in the same book the bishop of Cyzicus is presented as one who looks for truth with the art of dialectical shrewdness (τῇ τέχνῃ τῆς διαλεκτικῆς ἀγχινοίας), inserting with a trick in Gregory's discourse whatever he wanted, he contradicts himself and turns himself round (ἑαυτῷ μάχεται καὶ ἀνατρέπει), without touching on Gregory's speeches;[55] in *CE* III just for once the wise logographos (ὁ σοφὸς λογογράφος) lays his famous dialectical art to rest (τὴν πολυθρύλητον ἑαυτοῦ διαλεκτικήν), before proving what he is searching for.[56]

At this point the strategy of the bishop of Nyssa appears clearer. He does not renounce an elegant and polished style, as it is evident from his own writing, but strongly opposes the hazy and treacherous writing of a rival who does not search for the truth.[57] What on first sight can be Eunomius' point of strength, i.e. rhetorical skill, is actually the reason for his defeat. Therefore Gregory sets the opponent's speech out in front of his readers, so that it is evident to all that *Eunomius' own work becomes for his opponents the means for his own overthrow* (ὡς δ' ἂν μάλιστα γένοιτο πᾶσι δῆλον ὅτι αὐτὸς τοῦ Εὐνομίου ὁ πόνος τῆς

51 Cf. Dion. Halic., *Lys*. 19,9.

52 See L. Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain*, Études augustiniennes, série Antiquité 137–138, Paris 1993, I, 371–380.

53 See E. Vandenbussche, "La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius 'le technologue'", *RHE* 40 (1944/45), 47–72; *Lexicon gregorianum*, bearb. von F. Mann, Band II, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2000, 329f.

54 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* II 281.

55 Cf. *CE* II 512. On ἀνατρέπω cf. Poll., *Onom*. III 155 Ἄγχειν, στρέφειν, ἀπάγειν, λυγίζειν, ἀγκυρίζειν, ῥάσσειν, ἀνατρέπειν, ὑποσκελίζειν, καὶ πλαγιάζειν δὲ καὶ κλιμακίζειν παλαισμάτων ὀνόματα.

56 Cf. G. Nys., *CE* III 2,92.

57 See F. Mann, "Gregor, Rhetor et Pastor. Interpretation des Proömiums der Schrift Gregors von Nyssa *De infantibus praemature abreptis*", *VigChr* 31 (1977) 126–147.

ἰδίας ἀνατροπῆς ὕλη τοῖς προσπαλαίουσι γίνεται).[58] It is a polemic strategy well attested at the end of the fourth century, as I have shown with regard to the Macarius of Magnes' *Apocryticus*, in which the pagan, depicted as a very skilful orator, is ridiculed and discredited for his pompous and magniloquent, but at the same time shallow and inconclusive, eloquence.[59]

3 Image and Truth

With these preliminary remarks, the speech of Eunomius loses any claim to credibility and becomes before the eyes of all an idol of a speech:

> Αὐτὸ προθήσω τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι τοῦ λόγου τὸ εἴδωλον (οὕτω γὰρ οἶμαι χρῆναι τὸν ἔξω τῆς ἀλήθειας ὀνομάζεσθαι λόγον)· βραβευταὶ δὲ δίκαιοι τῆς νομίμου τῶν λόγων ἀθλήσεως γένοισθε πάντες οἱ τοῖς πόνοις ἡμῶν ἐντυγχάνοντες καὶ θεωροῦντες τὴν γινομένην νῦν τοῦ ἡμετέρου λόγου πρὸς ἀντίπαλον συμπλοκήν, ὡς ἂν διὰ τῆς δικαίας ὑμῶν ἐπικρίσεως ἀνακηρυχθείη παντὶ τῷ τῆς ἐκκλησίας θεάτρῳ τῆς εὐσεβείας ὁ λόγος, ἀνανταγώνιστον λαβὼν παρὰ πᾶσι κατὰ τῆς ἀσεβείας τὸ κράτος, διὰ τριῶν τῶν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ πτωμάτων τῷ ἀειθαλεῖ στεφάνῳ τῶν σῳζομένων καλλωπιζόμενος.
>
> I will put forward to the reader the idol of his word (for so, I think, the word which diverges from the truth should be described); you must be honest judges of the fair conduct of the verbal competition, all of you who encounter our labours and watch the struggle our word has with its antagonist, so that by your just verdict the word of orthodoxy may be announced to the whole arena of the Church, as having won undisputed mastery over impiety in the eyes of all, graced with the unfading wreath of victors for three throws of its rival.[60]

58 Cf. *CE* III 1,3. On προσπαλαίω cf. Poll. *Onom.* III 149 Πάλη καὶ παλαιστὴς καὶ παλαιστικός, παλαίσματα παλαιστικῶς, ἰσόπαλος, ἀντίπαλος, συγκεκληρωμένος, συλλαχών, ἔφεδρος, παλαίειν, διαπαλαίειν, καταπαλαίειν, προσπαλαίειν.

59 See A. Capone, "The narrative sections of Macarius Magnes' *Apocriticus*", in: A. Capone (ed.), *Lessico, argomentazioni e strutture retoriche della polemica di età cristiana* (*III–IV sec.*), Turnhout 2012, 253–270.

60 *CE* III 1,3.

Now combat is starting and two speeches wrestle and are locked in contest.[61] Therefore, as it happens in wrestling,[62] it is the turn of the judges to return a verdict and indeed Gregory finishes the preface with an appeal to just judges. At this moment it is timely to recall a passage of the *Protagoras*, in which Socrates threatens to go away, since the other speakers are not respecting the rules of dialogue, which require them to give short speeches in order not to overwhelm the interlocutor: he in fact claims that he is not able to compose long discourses unlike Protagoras. For this reason the other characters ask Socrates to choose a judge who moderates the length of the speeches, but Socrates refuses, as he finds it shameful to elect an arbiter of the discussion (αἰσχρὸν εἴη βραβευτὴν ἑλέσθαι τῶν λόγων) and considers that everyone must be judge of the conversation.[63] Therefore, Gregory too, like a new Socrates, is not satisfied by the verdict of only one judge, but looks for the assent of all his readers.[64]

The parallel between Socratic and Gregorian discourse on one hand and that of Eunomius and the Sophists on the other hand seems clearer, if we consider the phrase τὸ εἴδωλον τοῦ λόγου. In Plato's *Sophist* the technique of the sophist is said to be φανταστική and he himself is called εἰδωλοποιός. Now an image (εἴδωλον) is something similar to the model, but is not real and so is not true (τὸ πρὸς τἀληθινὸν ἀφωμοιωμένον ἕτερον τοιοῦτον). Consequently the technique of the sophist can be defined as deceptive (ἀπατητική) and his

61 On ἀντίπαλον cf. Sud. *s. v.* ἀντίπαλον· Τρία σημαίνει· τὸ ἐναντίον καὶ τὸ ἰσόπαλον καὶ τὸ ἰσόστροφον. οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἀντιπάλου τῆς δυνάμεως ὁ ἀγὼν ἔσται. Cf. also Greg. Nyss. *Inscr.* 2,2 Ἐπεὶ οὖν τέλος παντὸς ἀγῶνος ἡ νίκη γίνεται, πρὸς ἣν βλέποντες οἱ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἀποδυόμενοι τῆς ἀθλήσεως ἅπτονται, δοκεῖ μοι διὰ τοῦ τέλους ὁ λόγος ἐκ βραχείας φωνῆς ἐπεγείρειν εἰς προθυμίαν τοὺς διὰ τῶν ἀρετῶν ἀθλοῦντας ἐν τῷ σταδίῳ τοῦ βίου, ὡς ἂν εἰς τὸ τέλος βλέποντες, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη, τῇ τῶν στεφάνων ἐλπίδι τὸν ἐν τοῖς ἄθλοις πόνον ἐπικουφίζοιεν. Ὅπερ δὴ καὶ νῦν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσιν ὁρῶμεν γινόμενον. Προδεικνύμενος γὰρ τοῖς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς σταδίοις συμπλεκομένοις στέφανος ἐπιρρώννυσι μᾶλλον αὐτῶν τὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς νίκης σπουδήν, τῶν γινομένων αὐτοῖς διὰ τῆς συμπλοκῆς πόνων ὑπὸ τῆς ἐλπιζομένης εὐδοξίας ἐκκλεπτομένων. Πᾶσι τοίνυν ἠνεῳγμένου τοῦ σταδίου πρὸς ἄθλησιν (στάδιον δὲ ὁ κοινὸς τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίος ἐστίν), ἐν ᾧ εἷς ἀντίπαλός ἐστιν ἡ κακία πολυτρόπως τοῖς δολεροῖς παλαίσμασι καταγωνιζομένη τοὺς προσπαλαίοντας, διὰ τοῦτο ὁ ἀγαθὸς τῶν ψυχῶν παιδοτρίβης προδείκνυσί σοι τῶν ἱδρώτων τὸ τέλος καὶ τὸν ἐκ τῶν στεφάνων κόσμον καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ ἀνάρρησιν· ἵνα πρὸς ἐκεῖνο βλέπων τὸ τέλος τῷ νικοποιῷ σεαυτὸν ἐπερείδῃς καὶ τὸ ἐπινίκιον κήρυγμα σεαυτῷ παρασκευάζῃς.

62 The judge had a very important position in wrestling, as he could both decide the match and stop the combat, awarding the victory to one of the opponents on the ground of their evident superiority: see R. Patrucco, *Lo sport*, 300.

63 Cf. Plat., *Prot.* 338b–e.

64 One should note that in Gregory of Nyssa's works the substantive βραβευτής occurs only in the preface of *CE* III; for the verb βαρβέυω cf. G. Nys., *Thaum.* 31,4.

discourse false (λόγος ψευδής), when it affirms that things which are, are not, or that things which are not, are.[65]

On closer inspection, the Platonic echoes, which we have just noted with regard to similarities in vocabulary, in fact permeate all the entire preface of *CE* III: Eunomius is the head of the lie, he fights for falsehood, he is the author of sophistic speeches, which covered by beautiful words deny the truth and indeed change the truth itself into falsehood (τὴν ἀλήθειαν πολλάκις εἰς ὑπόνοιαν ψεύδους ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπείρων ἀντιμεθίστησιν). At once one recalls the words of Gorgias, who considered the rhetorician superior to the doctor, since he was able to persuade a sick person, although he recommended using the rhetoric like every other agonistic technique.[66] Therefore the metaphor of the fight, which opens and closes the preface as a frame, becomes gradually richer in meaning: the rules which discipline the challenge between Eunomius and Gregory are not those of sport any more, but those of rhetoric which arbitrate the discussion between the discourse of truth and the speech of falsehood.

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65 Cf. Plat., *Soph*. 239c–241a. See also F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of knowledge*, London 1967, 209ff and cf. Socrates' long speech on rhetoric defined as an image of politics in *Gorg*. 463ff: see E. R. Dodds, *Plato, Gorgias*, Oxford 1959, 226f.

66 Cf. Plat., *Gorg*. 456b–c Πολλάκις γὰρ ἤδη ἔγωγε μετὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἰατρῶν εἰσελθὼν παράτινα τῶν καμνόντων οὐχὶ ἐθέλοντα ἢ φάρμακον πιεῖν ἢ τεμεῖν ἢ καῦσαι παρασχεῖν τῷ ἰατρῷ, οὐ δυναμένου τοῦ ἰατροῦ πεῖσαι, ἐγὼ ἔπεισα, οὐκ ἄλλῃ τέχνῃ ἢ τῇ ῥητορικῇ . . . Δεῖ μέντοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, τῇ ῥητορικῇ χρῆσθαι ὥσπερ τῇ ἄλλῃ πάσῃ ἀγωνίᾳ. καὶ γὰρ τῇ ἄλλῃ ἀγωνίᾳ οὐ τούτου ἕνεκα δεῖ πρὸς ἅπαντας χρῆσθαι ἀνθρώπους.

Uncreated and Created: *Proverbs* 8 and *Contra Eunomium* III 1 as the Background to Gregory's Interpretation of the Tabernacle in *Life of Moses* II 173–7

Ann Conway-Jones

Introduction[1]

According to the book of Exodus, Moses ascends into the darkness of Mount Sinai, where he is shown the model (תבנית / παράδειγμα) of the tabernacle (משכן / σκηνή) which the Israelites are to build. In Hellenistic times it became widely assumed that this 'model' was the heavenly tabernacle—God's dwelling place. Such an interpretation can be seen in *Wisdom* 9,8 or *Hebrews* 8–10. In *Life of Moses*, Gregory tentatively interprets the heavenly and earthly tabernacles as types of the pre-existent and incarnate Christ:

> What then is that tabernacle not made with hands which was shown to Moses on the mountain and to which he was commanded to look as to an archetype so that he might reproduce in a handmade structure that marvel not made with hands? . . . It seems good to me to leave the precise meaning of these things to those who have by the Spirit the power to search the depths of God, to someone who may be able, as the Apostle says, to speak about mysterious things.[2] We shall leave what we say conjecturally and by supposition on the thought at hand to the judgment of our readers. Their critical intelligence must decide whether it should be rejected or accepted. Taking a hint from what has been said by Paul, who partially uncovered the mystery of these things, we say that Moses was earlier

1 I would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), who funded my PhD research, out of which this paper arose.

2 Gregory often uses 1 *Cor* 2,10 to justify his allegorical interpretation of scripture, as did Origen before him (for details see R. E. Heine, "Gregory of Nyssa's Apology for Allegory", *VigChr* 38 (1984) 360–370). He also does so, for example, in *CE* III 1 42. The following two sentences, however, carry a different tone. They suggest that Gregory is about to say something not well established, and which may be controversial.

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> instructed by a type in the mystery of the tabernacle which encompasses the universe. This tabernacle would be Christ who is the power and wisdom of God . . .[3]

This, according to Daniélou, is "une vue personnelle de Grégoire, comme il le dit lui-même".[4] There are precedents for the tabernacle being interpreted as a type of the church,[5] and for particular elements within it to be seen as symbols of Christ,[6] but not for the heavenly tabernacle as a whole to be construed as a type of Christ. Where, therefore, did Gregory get the idea from?

Proverbs 8 in *Contra Eunomium* III 1

Gregory offers 1 *Cor* 1,24 ("Christ who is the power and wisdom of God") as the proof text for his tabernacle interpretation. He continues:

> (Christ) in his own nature was not made with hands, yet capable of being made when it became necessary for this tabernacle to be erected among us. Thus, the same tabernacle is in a way both unfashioned and fashioned, uncreated in pre-existence but created in having received this material composition.[7]

The key to this statement is *Proverbs* 8, as interpreted in *Contra Eunomium* III 1. *Proverbs* 8,22, in its LXX translation, implies that wisdom was created:

> The Lord created (ἔκτισέν) me as the beginning of his ways, for the sake of his works.[8]

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3 *De vita Moysis* II 170, 173, 174. All translations of *Life of Moses* are taken from A. J. Malherbe – E. Ferguson, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses*, CWS, New York 1978. The text can be found in J. Daniélou, *Grégoire de Nysse: La Vie de Moïse, ou Traité de la perfection en matière de vertu*, SC 1bis, Paris 2000 (3rd ed.).

4 Daniélou, *Grégoire de Nysse: La Vie de Moïse*, 221, n. 1.

5 See Origen, *Homiliae in Exodum* IX 3, *Homiliae in Numeros* V 3; and Methodius, *Symposium* V 7–8.

6 See Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* V 35, where the golden candlestick is said to be a sign of Christ.

7 *Moys.* II 174.

8 Translations of the LXX are taken from A. Pietersma – B. G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, Oxford 2007.

This was exploited by the Arians:

> Because this saying is uttered by Wisdom, and the Lord is called Wisdom by great Paul (1 *Cor* 1,24), they advance this verse as meaning that the Only-begotten God himself, speaking as Wisdom, confesses that he was created by the Maker of all things.[9]

Gregory counters their arguments in *Contra Eunomium* I, *Contra Eunomium* III 1, and again in *Refutation of the Confession of Faith of Eunomius*.[10] In the *Refutation* he mentions translations which read 'acquired' (ἐκτήσατο) rather than 'created' (ἔκτισε);[11] but says that he is happy to stick with "the reading which prevails in the Churches" because:

> He Who for our sakes became like as we are, was in the last days truly *created*,—He Who in the beginning being Word and God afterwards became Flesh and Man.[12]

The verb, according to Gregory, refers to the incarnation. As he says in *Contra Eunomium* III 1, "the phrase, 'created me,' is not spoken by the one who is purely divine, but . . . by the one combined in the Economy with our created nature".[13]

In the course of his long, somewhat convoluted, argument in *CE* III 1, Gregory compares *Proverbs* with the *Gospel of John*. He says that they display the same structure, talking first of the pre-existent Christ's role in creation, and then of the incarnation:

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9 *CE* III 1 21 (GNO II 11,4–8; tr. Hall). For the early history of the debates around *Proverbs* 8,22–25, see S. Parvis, "Christology in the Early Arian Controversy: The Exegetical War", in: A. T. Lincoln – A. Paddison (eds.), *Christology and Scripture: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, London 2007, 120–137. She sets out the arguments of Arius, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Asterius the Sophist and Marcellus of Ancyra. The relationship between Gregory's argument and those earlier debates is explored in M. J. Van Parys, "Exégèse et théologie trinitaire: Prov. 8,22 chez les Pères Cappadociens", *Irénikon* 43 (1970) 362–379 and "Exégèse et théologie dans les livres contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse: Textes scripturaires controversés et élaboration théologique", in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse* (*Chevetogne 22–26 septembre 1969*), Leiden 1971, 169–196.

10 *CE* I 298–305 (GNO I 114–117), *CE* III 1 21–65 (GNO II 10–27), *Ref.* 110–113 (GNO II 358–360).

11 *Ref.* 110 (GNO II 358,13–15). Gregory is not specific about the "more ancient copies" which he has seen; but Eusebius (*De ecclesiastica theologia* III 2 15; *GCS* XIV 142) refers to Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, all of which use ἐκτήσατο rather than ἔκτισε.

12 *Ref.* 111 (GNO II 358; tr. NPNF² V 117), cf. *CE* I 299 (GNO I 115).

13 *CE* III 1 50 (GNO II 21; tr. Hall).

> It is . . . possible to see Solomon . . . presenting the whole mystery of the Economy. He speaks earlier of the pre-temporal power and activity of Wisdom, when in a way he agrees even verbally with the Evangelist. Just as *John* in comprehensive language proclaims him Cause and Designer of all things (*Jo* 1,3), so Solomon says that every single thing in the universe was made by him. He says, "By Wisdom God laid the foundations of the earth, by intelligence prepared the heavens" (*Prov* 3,19) . . . Having presented these and similar matters he brings in also the doctrine of the human Economy, why the Word became flesh.[14]

In *Life of Moses* he detects the same two-fold structure in the tabernacle narrative of Exodus.

After *Proverbs* 8,22 come verses 23–5:

> Before the present age (πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος) he founded me (ἐθεμελίωσέν με), in the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ). Before he made the earth and before he made the depths, before he brought forth the springs of the waters, before the mountains were established and before the hills, he begets me (γεννᾷ με).

Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus, like Gregory of Nyssa, relate the verb 'created' in 8,22 to the incarnation; they then interpret the verb 'beget' in 8,25 as referring to "the primal and less comprehensible" generation.[15] Gregory of Nyssa, however, argues that after Solomon prophesies the incarnation he moves on to the transformation that it brings to humanity:[16]

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14 *CE* III 1 46–48 (GNO II 19–20; tr. Hall).

15 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 30,2 (tr. F. W. Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen*, SVigChr 13, Leiden 1991, 263). For Athanasius see *De decretis* 13–14; *Orationes contra Arianos* II 56, 57, 60, 61. Details of Athanasius' interpretation can be found in A. L. Clayton, *The Orthodox Recovery of a Heretical Proof-Text: Athanasius of Alexandria's Interpretation of Proverbs 8:22–30 in Conflict with the Arians*, PhD thesis, Southern Methodist University 1988. Although Athanasius produced two distinct exegeses of *Proverbs* 8,22ff, in both he "read v. 25 as a statement about the inner life of God" (Clayton, *The Orthodox Recovery of a Heretical Proof-Text*, 287).

16 It was Marcellus of Ancyra who first suggested that 'created' referred to the incarnation. He related the whole of *Proverbs* 8,22–25 to the salvific work of Jesus and the life of the Church, producing allegorical interpretations of 'earth', 'depths', 'springs' and 'mountains'. See S. Parvis, "'Τὰ τίνων ἄρα ῥήματα θεολογεῖ?': The Exegetical Relationship between Athanasius' *Orationes Contra Arianos I–III* and Marcellus of Ancyra's *Contra Asterium*", in: L. DiTommaso – L. Turcescu (eds.), *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late*

> The divine scripture figuratively calls (the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit), by a kind of naturally fitting signification, mountains and hills, calling righteousness the mountains of God, and naming his judgments 'deeps', and 'earth' that which is sown by the Word and produces the plentiful harvest (*Mk* 4.8 par.) . . . So in order that these things may happen among us, the Designer of these things must be born (γεννηθῆναι) in us.[17]

The verb 'beget' refers to Christ's birth in us. Gregory's tabernacle interpretation in *Life of Moses* also follows this structure: the heavenly tabernacle as the pre-existent Christ; the earthly tabernacle as the incarnation and the body of Christ (i.e. the church); the priestly garments as the transformed life of virtue. There, since *Exodus* provides his biblical foundation, virtue is symbolised not by mountains, hills, and depths, but by the robe, ephod, breast-piece and other vestments. The blue robe of the high priest, for example, represents the airy spiritual life, in the same way as do the winds of *Proverbs* 8,27.[18]

Wisdom and the Tabernacle

There is more to the relationship between the tabernacle and wisdom than the same two-fold structure. Gregory is drawing on longstanding traditions. The idea of wisdom dwelling on earth in a tent/tabernacle can be found in *Sirach* 24, itself a meditation on *Proverbs* 8:

> Then the creator of all commanded me,
> and he who created me (wisdom) put down my tent (τὴν σκηνήν μου)
> and said, "Encamp (κατασκήνωσον) in Iakob,
> and in Israel let your inheritance be".
> Before the age, from the beginning, he created me,
> and until the age I will never fail.

Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11–13 October 2006, Leiden 2008, 337–367, 354–356; and fragments 23–46 in M. Vinzent, *Markell von Ankyra: Die Fragmente; Der Brief an Julius von Rom*, SVigChr 39, Leiden 1997, 24–41. Gregory ignored Athanasius' reworking, and went back to Marcellus' outline. But he produced different allegorical interpretations. Cassin suggests that Gregory took note of the criticisms levelled at Marcellus by Eusebius of Caesarea. See M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique à la fin du IV^e^ siècle: Grégoire de Nysse, Contre Eunome III, PhD thesis*, Université Paris IV – Sorbonne 2009, 346–347.

17 *CE* III 1 56 (GNO II 23; tr. Hall).

18 *Moys.* II 191; *CE* III 1 59 (GNO II 25).

> In a holy tent (ἐν σκηνῇ ἁγίᾳ) I ministered before him,
> and thus in Sion I was firmly set.[19]

Philo describes the tabernacle as God's dwelling place, and therefore as wisdom, for "wisdom is the court and palace of the All-ruler, the sole Monarch, the Sovereign Lord".[20]

In his justification for applying the name 'tabernacle' to Christ, Gregory says, "For there is one thing out of all others which both existed before the ages and came into being at the end of the ages".[21] This alludes to *John* 1,1–18 and *Colossians* 1,15–20, texts which have appropriated Jewish wisdom traditions.[22] They also lie behind the phrase "who encompasses (περιέχων) everything in himself", variations on which are repeated three times in *Life of Moses* II 173–179.[23] Gregory refers to the same passages in his discussion of *Proverbs* 8,22 in *Contra Eunomium* I.[24] There he simply uses them to prove that Christ is not a creature. In *Life of Moses* he creates a complex web of allusions, linking Christ with the tabernacle in three ways: 1) as the agent/pattern of creation, 2) as the dwelling of the fullness of God, and 3) as present on earth. All three characterisations of wisdom/Christ are to be found in *CE* III 1. In *Life of Moses* Gregory adds the connection to the tabernacle.

1 *Wisdom/Christ/the Tabernacle as Agent/Pattern of Creation*

The reflections on Christ in *Colossians* 1,15–20 and *John* 1,1–18 seem to have linked the 'beginning' in *Proverbs* 8,22 with the 'beginning' in *Genesis* 1,1, so as to make wisdom/Christ the agent of creation: through wisdom God created the heavens and the earth. Alexander argues that although Hellenistic Jewish works, such as Wisdom, Ben Sira and Philo, came close to doing so, *Colossians* was the first text to make this exegetical move.[25] *Colossians* combines this

19 *Sirach* 24,8–10.

20 *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 116. Translations of Philo are taken from F. H. Colson – G. H. Whitaker – R. Marcus, *Philo in Ten Volumes* (*and Two Supplementary Volumes*), London 1929–1962.

21 *Moys.* II 175.

22 Barrett, for example, states, "Col. 1.15–20 shows as clearly as does John 1.1–18 the use of language drawn from Jewish speculations about Wisdom" (C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, London^2 1978, 154).

23 *Moys.* II 174, 175, 177.

24 *CE* I 301–302 (GNO I 115–116).

25 P. S. Alexander, "'In the Beginning': Rabbinic and Patristic Exegesis of Genesis 1:1", in: E. Grypeou – H. Spurling (eds.), *The Exegetical Encounter between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity*, Leiden 2009, 1–29, 23.

idea of Christ as the agent of creation with Christ as the continuing sum and foundation of creation: "in him all things hold together (τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν)".[26] This echoes *Wisdom* 1,7: "that which holds all things together (τὸ συνέχον τὰ πάντα)". For Philo, the tabernacle is a microcosm of creation.[27] He interprets the *Genesis* creation narrative using the concept of a παράδειγμα:

> When (God) willed to create this visible world He first fully formed the intelligible world, in order that He might have the use of a pattern (παραδείγματι) wholly God-like and incorporeal in producing the material world . . .[28]

In *Questions on Exodus* he implies that the παράδειγμα of the tabernacle, seen by Moses, was this pattern for creation:

> For it was indeed proper and fitting to reveal to an intelligent man the forms of intelligible things and the measure of all things in accordance with which the world was made.[29]

Gregory, therefore, has inherited a variety of traditions in which the tabernacle, wisdom, and Christ are the agents/patterns/foundations of creation. In *Life of Moses* it makes sense to refer to Christ as "the power which encompasses the universe (ἡ περιεκτικὴ τῶν ὄντων δύναμις)" and "the common protector of all (ἡ κοινὴ τοῦ παντὸς σκέπη)" in the context of the heavenly tabernacle because it is the function of a tent to enclose and protect.[30]

The phrase "who encompasses (περιέχων) everything in himself" also has theological implications. One of the ways in which Philo expresses God's transcendence is with the phrase 'enclosing, not enclosed' (περιέχων, οὐ περιεχόμενος).[31] Gregory goes further than Philo, and uses this formula to argue for the incomprehensibility and infinity of God.[32] In the context of Moses' request to see God (*Ex* 33,18), he says:

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26 *Col* 1,17.

27 *De vita Mosis* II 81–108; *QE* 83–85.

28 *De opificio mundi* 16.

29 *QE* 52, cf. 82.

30 *Moys.* II 177.

31 See, for example, *Legum allegoriae* I 44, or *De somniis* I 63.

32 For a discussion of this formula, and its bearing on the infinity of God, see W. R. Schoedel, "Enclosing, not Enclosed: The Early Christian Doctrine of God", in: W. R. Schoedel – R. L. Wilken (eds.), *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, Paris 1979, 75–86.

> (Moses) learns from what was said that the Divine is by its very nature infinite, enclosed (περιειργόμενον) by no boundary.... Since what is encompassed (περιεχομένου) is certainly less than what encompasses (περιέχοντος), it would follow that the stronger prevails. He who encloses the Divine by any boundary makes out that the Good is ruled over by its opposite. But that is out of the question. Therefore, no consideration will be given to anything enclosing (περίληψίς) infinite nature.[33]

So it would seem that Gregory has transformed the understanding of the tabernacle as a structure enclosing the universe, as in earlier cosmological interpretations, into a representation of Christ participating in the infinity of God, and therefore encompassing everything. He gives us the paradoxical picture of an infinite tent.

2 *Wisdom/Christ/the Tabernacle as the Dwelling of the Fullness of God*

The purpose of the earthly tabernacle built by Moses and the people of Israel was to provide a dwelling place for the glory of God:

> Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (וכבוד יהוה מלא את־המשכן, LXX: καὶ δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή).[34]

John 1,14–16 reworks the key concepts of that verse—glory, filling and tabernacle:

> And the Word became flesh and dwelt (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us, full (πλήρης) of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory (δόξαν), glory as of the only Son from the Father.
>
> ...And from his fullness (ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος) have we all received, grace upon grace.

Colossians 1,19 also refers to fullness:

> For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell (ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι)...

33 *Moys.* II 236, 238.

34 *Ex* 40,34; cf. 1 *Kings* 8,10–11.

In 2,9 this seems to be commented upon and clarified:

> For in (Christ) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς) . . .[35]

Gregory relates these references to the tabernacle:

> For the power . . . in which *lives the fulness of divinity* (ἐν ᾗ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος) . . . who encompasses everything within himself, is rightly called 'tabernacle'.[36]

He is taking πλήρωμα as linked to the verb πλήθω in *Ex* 40,34. Christ, like the tabernacle, is filled with the fullness/glory of God. Gregory quotes from *Col* 2,9, but omits σωματικῶς. It would seem that, unlike *John* 1,14, he is referring to the divine, not the earthly Christ. This is confirmed by his reference to 'fullness' in *CE* III 1. There he brings together *John* 1,1, 1,16 and 1,18:

> The one who is in the bosom of the Father never allows the Paternal bosom to be thought empty of himself. So it is not as something external put into his bosom, but because he is the fullness of all goodness, that the one who is 'in the beginning' is deemed to be in the Father, not waiting to be generated in him by creation, so that the Father might not ever be deemed wanting in good things.[37]

3 *Wisdom/Christ/the Tabernacle as Present on Earth*

As we have seen, Sirach describes wisdom tabernacling (κατασκηνόω) on earth. This may well be an interpretation of *Proverbs* 8,31, which talks of God rejoicing among the children of men. *John* 1,14 says that "the Word became flesh and dwelt (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us". Gregory picks up on this in *Life of Moses* II 175:

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35 There is debate amongst commentators on *Colossians* on how to understand the adverb σωματικῶς, given the present tense of κατοικεῖ. Rowland suggests that it refers to Christ's glorious heavenly body (C. Rowland – C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament*, CRI 12, Leiden 2009, 161).

36 *Moys.* II 177.

37 *CE* III 1 49 (GNO II 20–21; tr. Hall). In *Ref.* 191-192 (GNO II 393) Gregory brings *John* 1,16 together with *John* 20,21 (Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit upon the disciples), in order to prove that the fullness of God dwells in the Holy Spirit.

> This one is the Only Begotten God, who encompasses everything in himself but who also pitched his own tabernacle among us (πηξάμενος δὲ καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν τὴν ἰδίαν σκηνήν).

In *CE* III 1, when he refers to the word becoming flesh, he relates it not only to *Proverbs* 8,22, but also to *Proverbs* 9,1—wisdom building a house for herself.[38] This raises questions about Gregory's Christology. There is an important difference between *John* 1,14 and Gregory's reference to it in *Life of Moses*. Whereas *John* 1,14 uses the verb σκηνόω, which leaves open the exact nature of the relationship between 'Word' and 'flesh', Gregory uses the phrase πήγνυμαι σκηνήν, more in line with *John* 2,19–21, where Jesus' body is described as a temple. Σκῆνος, a cognate of σκηνή, had long been used to designate the human body.[39] It is used in that way in *Wisdom* (9,15) and by Paul (2 *Cor* 5,1–4). In the LXX σκήνωμα and σκηνή are synonyms, both used to translate משכן. By Gregory's time they too have acquired associations with the human body, and Gregory uses all three words (σκηνή, σκῆνος, σκήνωμα) to refer to it.[40] With regard to Christ, he talks of the σκήνωμα formed when the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin;[41] and says that Christ drew humanity up to immortal life by means of the man in whom he tabernacled (διὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ᾧ κατεσκήνωσεν).[42] So the σκηνή of the earthly tabernacle would seem to be invoking the temporary human body within which Christ consents to be confined: "created in having received this material composition (τῷ δὲ ὑλικὴν ταύτην δέξασθαι σύστασιν κτίστην γενομένην)".[43] At the incarnation, the heavenly tabernacle is, as it were, turned inside out: the infinite becomes contained within a finite 'tent'.[44] That Gregory identifies the earthly tabernacle with Jesus' body explains why his imagery was not taken up by later patristic authors: it implied too extrinsic a relationship between the human and divine natures of Christ. From the fifth

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38 *CE* III 1 44 (GNO II 19).

39 It occurs in Democritus and in Pseudo-Plato *Axiochos*. See W. Michaelis, "σκηνή, σκῆνος, σκήνωμα, σκηνόω, ἐπισκηνόω, κατασκηνόω, σκηνοπηγία, σκηνοποιός", in: G. Friedrich (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. VII, Grand Rapids 1971, 368–394, 381; and J. Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, Notre Dame, Indiana 1956, 345, n. 27.

40 See *Virg.* (GNO VIII 1 270,25; 271,2) and *Inscr.* II 6 (GNO V 87,10).

41 *Ep.* 3,20 (GNO VIII 2 25,12).

42 *CE* III 3,51 (GNO II 126,5).

43 *Moys.* II 174.

44 Douglass calls this a '*metadiastemic* intrusion'. See S. Douglass, *Theology of the Gap: Cappadocian Language Theory and the Trinitarian Controversy*, New York 2005, 132–140.

century onwards, 'tabernacle' was used as a metaphor for the Virgin Mary,[45] in whose case an extrinsic relationship with deity was deemed more appropriate.

Conclusions

Gregory's interpretation of the heavenly and earthly tabernacles in *Life of Moses* II 173–177 is a dense passage, with a hinterland of unexplained exegetical moves. It can, however, be elucidated with the help of *Contra Eunomium* III 1. There Gregory sets out to refute Eunomius' characterisation of the Only-begotten Son as 'something made' (ποιήματος) and 'something created' (κτίσματος).[46] In *Life of Moses* he stresses that the tabernacle seen by Moses is 'not made with hands' (ἀχειροποίητος),[47] and thus is a fitting type for the uncreated Christ. Thanks to *John* 1,14, he has no problem making its earthly counterpart a type of the incarnate Christ. The language of *Life of Moses* II 173–177 is particularly reminiscent of Gregory's arguments against the Arian interpretation of *Proverbs* 8,22, as set out in *CE* III 1 21–65. He detects in both the book of *Proverbs* and the tabernacle narrative in *Exodus* a structure of heavenly Christ, incarnate Christ and transformed life of virtue. By bringing in *Colossians* 1,15–20 and *John* 1,1–18, he is able to call upon a complex web of relationships between wisdom, Christ and the tabernacle. In naming Christ 'tabernacle', he creates three pictures: 1) the heavenly, divine Christ as a tent enclosing the created universe; 2) the heavenly, divine Christ as a tent containing the fullness of God, and therefore participating in the infinity of God; 3) Christ dwelling within the tabernacle of a human body at the incarnation. No-one before him had proposed the whole tabernacle as representing Christ, because that typology arose out of the controversy with Eunomius. No-one after him took it up, because it did not fit with later articulations of Christology. As Daley comments,

> (Gregory) rarely uses the vocabulary he and his fellow Cappadocians had so carefully honed for Trinitarian discussions to express what is one and what is manifold in Christ, but speaks instead in a variety of scriptural and philosophical images which were richly suggestive for him, but

45 See, for example, Proclus of Constantinople *Homily* 6,17.9: Αὕτη ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου, ἀφ' ἧς νεὸς ὢν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τὸν ἐνναμηνιαῖον τοῦ ἐμβρύου χρόνον, ἐξεπορεύετο (F. J. Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople: Tradition manuscrite, inédits, études connexes*, StT 247, Vatican City 1967, 323).

46 *CE* III 1 7 (GNO II 6).

47 He repeats the adjective eight times in *Life of Moses* II 167–174.

which were used for different purposes by both sides of the Christological conflicts a half-century later.[48]

One of those images is the tabernacle. The uncreated tabernacle as the infinite Christ containing the fullness of God and the whole of creation, and the created tabernacle as the human body within which the pre-existent Christ consented to be born, could not survive the fifth century Christological controversies.

48 B. E. Daley, "Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa's Anti-Apollinarian Christology", in: S. Coakley (ed.), *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa*, Oxford 2003, 67–76, 68.

From Light to Darkness: The Progress of the Spiritual Journey according to Gregory of Nyssa's *De vita Moysis*

Hui Xia

Introduction

In his *De Vita Moysis* (*VM*) Gregory of Nyssa describes the spiritual journey of the soul towards God. Part of that journey, the description of Moses' encounter with God on Mt. Sinai, has aroused a lot of scholarly interest. Whether the depiction implies a mystical union between man and God on this spiritual journey is a question under discussion. If there is a mystical union, that means that there is a time when the soul exceeds its own sensual and intellectual limits and penetrates into God's mystery. Jean Daniélou, Andrew Louth, and Warren Smith defend the idea of a mystical union by imposing on the structure of *VM* three stages of spiritual experience: purification, illumination and union.[1] The difficulty of their position lies in that Gregory's own elaboration in *VM* does not strictly follow the sequence of these three stages.[2] The imposition of this three-fold framework cannot be reconciled with the fact that Gregory composes *VM* as a picture of Moses' ever-higher ascent from one step to another. Martine Laird reads *VM* according to the sequence of Gregory's narration. He finds it very hard to demonstrate a mystical union in this work, while the union is clearly present in *Cant*.[3] Some other scholars deny the existence of a mystical stage in *VM*. For example, Ekkehard Mühlenberg, in his philosophical interpretation of Gregory's idea of God's infinity, stresses the radical

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* Translations: *LM*: A. J. Malherbe – E. Ferguson, *Gregory of Nyssa. The Life of Moses*, ClWS, New York 1978. Hall, *Beatitudes*: S. G. Hall, "On the Beatitudes", in: H. R. Drobner – A. Viciano (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Beatitudes: an English version with Commentary and Supporting Studies*, SVigChr 52, Leiden 2000, 21–90. R. E. Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms. Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Oxford 1995.

1 J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique: essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1954; A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, Oxford 2007, 81–86; W. J. Smith, *Passion and Paradise: Human and Divine Emotion in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa*, New York 2004, 150–182.

2 Daniélou, *Platonisme*, 17–18; Louth, *Origins*, 82–85; Smith, *Passion*, 153.

3 M. Laird, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Grasp of Faith: Union, Knowledge, and Divine Presence*, Oxford Early Christian Studies, Oxford 2004, 50.

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distinction between God's essence and attributes. Mühlenberg thus holds that for Gregory the inaccessibility of God's essence is uncompromised with human mystical union with God.[4] Thomas Böhm, after investigating the philosophical significance of certain concepts in *VM*, such as 'participation', 'likeness', 'theoria', and 'mystical', concludes that the spiritual journey is concerned only with the intellectual contemplation of God. For Böhm the spiritual journey does not arrive at a union with God, but is always under the way of spiritual advancing instead.[5]

In this paper, I am going to show that the stage of mystical union can be found in *VM* without altering the sequence of its narration. Such a reading substitutes the three-fold schema proposed by Daniélou, Louth, and Smith with a two-fold division of the spiritual journey in *VM*: the preliminary stage and the mystical stage. Gregory connects the preliminary stage with human experience and uses the imagery of light to describe that stage; conversely he uses the imagery of darkness to describe the mystical stage.

The structure of *VM* consists of three sections: *prologue, historia* and *theoria*. The prologue gives a short explanation of the purpose of the treatise and introduces readers to the topic of perfection as perpetual progress. In *historia* Gregory presents the details of Moses' life as found in Exodus and Numbers; in *theoria* he gives a symbolic interpretation of these events in the form of a description of a spiritual itinerary. *Theoria* begins with the birth of Moses, describes Moses' first encounter with God in the burning bush (GNO VII/I 33.13–48.14), and then moves to the events in bringing Israelites out of Egypt (GNO VII/I 48.14–82.3). There are two further encounters between Moses and God, first in the darkness (GNO VII/I 82.4–110.2) and then when Moses sees God's back from a cleft in the rock (GNO VII/I 110.3–122.5). Finally there is a battle between Moses and evil (GNO VII/I 122.5–138.13), and a concluding commentary (GNO VII/I 138.14–143.18). Moses' three encounters with God, first in the burning bush, then in the darkness and last in the cleft of the rock, are called theophanies. The second and the third theophanies constitute a single scene of Moses' encounter with God on Mt. Sinai .[6]

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4 E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen Metaphysik*, FKDG 16, Göttingen 1966.

5 Th. Böhm, *Theoria—Unendlichkeit—Aufstieg. Philosophische Implikationen zu De vita Moysis von Gregor von Nyssa*, SVigChr 35, Leiden 1996.

6 There are different opinions on what are the second and the third theophanies in *VM*. For example, Andrew Louth identifies the second theophany with cloud, and the third theophany with darkness. (See Louth, *Origins*, 81–86). In fact, starting from Moses' encounter with God in the cloud, Moses enters into a continuous growth in God's presence. How to define

Traditionally, the whole *theoria* is regarded as concerning only the spiritual journey of Moses. There is one scholar, however, Patrick F. O'Connell, who discovers that between the first and the second theophanies (GNO VII/I 48.14–82.3), the subject of the story changes from Moses to the Israelites.[7] He therefore finds two parallel spiritual journeys, one of Moses and one of the Israelite people. The section from the beginning of *theoria* to the first theophany concerns Moses' spiritual growth. The part between the first and the second theophanies deals with the spiritual journey of the Israelites. The next two theophanies return to the discussion of Moses' spiritual growth. The final sections of the treatise put the highly spiritual Moses into contrast with the Israelites, the victims of evil.

Following O'Connell's reconstruction, I contend that the first half of Moses' spiritual journey is similar to the spiritual journey of the Israelites narrated in between the first two theophanies. The second description of Moses' spiritual journey refers to a unique mystical experience of Moses. Therefore the spiritual journey can be divided into two stages, the preliminary stage, which Moses and the Israelites share in common, and the mystical stage, which Moses alone undergoes. The preliminary stage is characterized by the use of the imagery of light, the mystical stage by the use of the imagery of darkness.

The Preliminary Stage

The Parallelism between the Preliminary Stage of Moses' Spiritual Journey (GNO VII/I 33.13–48.14) and that of the Israelites (GNO VII/I 48.14–82.3)

First of all I want to show that there is a parallelism between the preliminary stage of Moses' spiritual journey (GNO VII/I 33.13–48.14) and the spiritual journey of the Israelites (GNO VII/I 48.14–82.3). I start with the journey of Moses. Gregory sees every element of Moses' birth story as corresponding to a part of the spiritual life: First Moses' birth is a metaphor for a spiritual birth. Second Moses survives the killing of the Hebrew male offspring in Egypt. For Gregory

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the different levels within this encounter depends on how to understand the different stages of the spiritual journey. In view of my argumentation, I follow Thomas Böhm's definition in my article. (See Böhm, *Theoria*, 235–264).

7 P. F. O'Connell, "The Double Journey in Saint Gregory of Nyssa: *The De vita Moysis*", *GOTR* 28 (1983) 301–324, here 308–309. Other scholars, such as Jean Daniélou and Warren Smith, on the other hand, do not give enough care to the subject of the narrations, therefore count this section into the spiritual journey of Moses. See Smith, *Passion*, 159–161; 153–154.

this survival indicates that the spiritual life begins with a free moral choice, namely the choice of virtue (ἀρετή). Moses is then held in a papyrus basket that makes its way to Pharaoh's daughter—this journey in the basket means that it requires constant effort to keep with the virtuous way of life. Such effort is in fact the ethical formation of the self (παίδευσις).[8] This ethical training leads to the purification of the soul. After the soul is purified, Moses is able to see God's light in the burning bush, as described in the first theophany (GNO VII/I 38.25–44.24). This light shows Moses that the essence of the Divine is far beyond 'things which are apprehended by sense perception and contemplated by the understanding' (ὅσα τε τῇ αἰσθήσει καταλαμβάνεται καὸ ὅσα κατὰ διάνοιαν θεωρεῖται).[9] On the other hand, it also shows that all beings are able to participate in true Being. Therefore, by encountering God's light, Moses began his life within God's life. Gregory then interprets the burning bush as a type of the Incarnation, where God 'made himself visible to us in the flesh' (διὰ σαρκὸς ἡμῖν ὀφθέντι).[10] This light of the burning bush thus brings Moses into a personal relation with God.

After the narration of the first theophany, the subject of the narration changes from Moses to the Israelite people. Gregory begins to talk about the Israelites' spiritual journey, which is parallel to that of Moses. The Israelites too embark on their spiritual journey with free choice: they choose to accept God's 'words of freedom' as proclaimed by Moses (GNO VII/I 48.14–51.5).[11] The choice also initiates the process of purification, since Gregory says that the words help the Israelites to 'escape from their wretched labor of brick making (τὴν πλινθείαν ταλαιπωρίας)',[12] which is interpreted by Gregory as liberation from the insatiable human desire for pleasure.[13] The need for constant effort in ethical training is implied when Gregory emphasizes that earthly desire always accompanies bodily existence. The fruit of the purification is implied in the story of the Israelites escaping from death by the firstborn in Egypt (GNO VII/I 60.1–64.5), since this escape from Egypt indicates the killing of the first offspring of evil (τὴν πρώτην τοῦ κακοῦ γένεσιν).[14] In the manna story (GNO VII/I 76.22–80.7), the Israelites also arrive at a spiritual maturity which enables them to build a personal relation to God. Gregory explains the manna as the

8 GNO VII/I 35,12; tr. LM, 56.

9 GNO VII/I 40,14–15; tr. LM, 60.

10 GNO VII/I 39,10–11; tr. LM, 59.

11 GNO VII/I 48,17–22; tr. LM, 66.

12 GNO VII/I 48,21–22; tr. LM, 66.

13 LM, 166, n. 83.

14 GNO VII/I 60,11–12; tr. LM, 75.

Incarnate Word.[15] It relates to each one in a personal way, for it satisfies the soul in conformity with each one's desire (κατὰ τὸ εἶδος τῆς ἐπιθυμίας).[16] 'He knows not only to be bread but also to become milk and meat . . . appropriate to and desired by the one who receives him (τῷ προσφερομένῳ κατάλληλόν τε καὶ καταθύμιον).'[17]

Comparing these two spiritual journeys, we can name the following characteristics of the preliminary stage of the spiritual journey:

1. The preliminary stage is centered on human willingness to live a virtuous life according to the words of God.
2. The process of the purification of the soul begins with continual self-formation.
3. This process of purification ends when the soul enters into a personal relation to God.

The Role of Light in the Preliminary Stage

The preliminary stage can be characterized as the stage of light. Light has a special meaning in this context. According to Adolf M. Ritter's study, the imagery of light (φῶς) in Gregory has four basic uses: in 'comparisons from nature', as metaphors, as natural light, and as the Son of God.[18] Among these four, the metaphorical usage is essential here. For Gregory, as for the Aristotelian tradition, metaphor transfers one thing to another.[19] Light as metaphor refers to the self-manifestation of the inaccessible God. This self-manifestation is realized through things that are visible in the world. They function as means. The Incarnation is the ultimate instance of these means, so that the Son of God is called the 'true light' by Gregory. In what follows I will explain that the preliminary stage is the stage of light because in this stage the soul is connected with God through mediation.

In Moses' preliminary journey, light is mentioned at his encounter with God in the burning bush. The double character of the burning bush shows it's mediating function. The burning bush has both the enlightening flame referring to God—'truth is God and truth is light (θεὸς μὲν ἡ ἀλήθεια, ἡ δὲ ἀλήθεια φῶς ἐστι)'—and the substantial aspect: the light 'did not shine from some luminary

15 GNO VII/I 77,24–78,1; tr. LM, 88.

16 GNO VII/I 77,7–9; tr. LM, 87.

17 GNO VII/I 78,4–6; tr. LM, 88.

18 A. M. Ritter, "Light", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 447–450.

19 *Ibid.*, 448.

among the stars but came from an earthly bush (ἀπὸ γηΐνης θάμνου).'[20] Gregory then relates the light of the burning bush to the Incarnation: The light is 'God who made himself visible to us in the flesh (τῷ διὰ σαρκὸς ἡμιν ὀφθέντι θεῷ)', and who 'has reached down even to human nature (ὅ μέχρι τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάτεισι φύσεως)'.[21] Gregory also highlights the tight connection between light, incarnation, and flesh in *Inscr* when he contrasts the idols of pagans and the true Christian light, 'And when he has foretold the destruction of idols and the extermination of such error, on which he says, "*Let all who worship graven images be put to shame, who glory in their idols*", (Ps. 96:7) he brings in the seal of the good, the appearance of the Lord (τοῦ κυρίου ἐμφάνειαν) to men which occurred through flesh (διὰ σαρκὸς), when he says, "*Light* (*Φῶς*) *has risen for the just, and joy for the upright in heart*" (Ps. 96:11)'.[22] This mediating light is crucial in bringing one's soul to Christ. Gregory finds such a moment of seeing the light of Christ not only in Moses' life, but also in John's words and Paul's life in *CE* II, 'Moses, seeing the Lord in the light, and John, calling him "the true Light", (Jn 1,9) and in the same way Paul, when at the first manifestation of God to him he was surrounded by light and afterwards he heard the words from the light, "I am Jesus whom you persecute" (Acts 9,5)—was he not sufficient as a witness?'[23]

The mediating light does not only appear at the end of the spiritual journey but is present throughout the preliminary stage and from its very beginning as well. In *Beat* Gregory begins the first of his eight homilies, a homily that describes the beginning of a spiritual journey, with a picture of the words of God shining as light over the spiritual mountain, illuminating the way of the soul to ascend to the Kingdom of God. The spiritual mountain is 'illuminated on every side by the radiance of the true light (τῇ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ φωτὸς ἀκτῖνι περιλαμπόμενον), allows us in the clear air of truth to view from a place of vantage (δίδωσιν ἐκ περιωπῆς καθορᾶν) all that is invisible (ἀθέατα) to those

20 GNO VII/I 39,8–9; 13–16; tr. LM, 59. Emphasizing on the substantial aspect of light is where the first theophany differs from the other two theophanies. See O'Connell, "Double Journey", 305.

21 GNO VII/I 39,10–11;12–13; tr. LM, 59.

22 GNO V 105,10–16; tr. Heine, *Inscriptions*, 155.

23 GNO I 349,1–6; tr. S. G. Hall, "Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II", in: L. Karfiková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies* (*Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa, Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004*). SVigChr 82, Leiden, Boston 2007, 59–201, 136. Stuart Hall guesses that 'seeing the Lord in the light' is probably alluding to the pillar of fire, which symbolizes the presence of the Lord in Ex 13,21 etc., rather than Ex 3,2 (the burning bush). See Hall, "Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II", 136.

labouring in the hollow.'[24] Each of these eight homilies meditates on one of the eight beatitudes. They form eight steps in the spiritual journey. Each step is guided by the light of God's words about blessedness. In *VM* this guiding light is described in the Israelites' journey. The journey of the Israelites begins with an announcement from God, proclaimed by Moses (GNO VII/I 48.14–51.5). Moses becomes the mediator between God and the people of Israel after encountering God in the burning bush: 'Moses . . . boldly delivered to the people the words of freedom (τῷ λαῷ τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας προσάγει λόγους).'[25] 'The words of freedom' correspond to the words of beatitude in *Beat*. Since the words of God concern virtues, Gregory speaks of 'the light of virtue' (τῷ φωτὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς).[26] Gregory relates virtue to light in *Inscr* too, where he says that those who 'look to virtue' (πρὸς τὴν ἀρετὴν βλέπων) will see 'the good in the light' (ἐν δὲ τῷ φωτὶ τὸ καλὸν βλέπει).[27] In *VM* this light of virtue makes the 'understanding enlightened (ἐν φωτὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἔχει)'.[28] Also in *Inscr* Gregory summarizes Israelites exodus as immersing in light:

> He destroyed the Egyptian tyrant and his army by successive plagues, and freed Israel from tyranny by means of the *light* (τοῦ φωτὸς) and the water (Cf. Acts 7:36; Heb. 11:29; Exod. 14:19–31). After the departure from Egypt time was one continuous day for Israel. No longer did the night become black with darkness, for after the course of the day Israel received bright rays in succession . . . but continuous and perpetual *light* (τὸ φῶς) remained, since the brilliance of the pillar received *light* from the rays of the sun continuously. (Cf. Ps. 77:14)[29]

Light is mentioned at the beginning of Israelites' exodus, and is interpreted as the starting point of the Israelites' freedom: God 'freed Israel from tyranny by means of the *light* (τοῦ φωτὸς) and the water'. The following journey of the Israelites is accompanied by light constantly. The 'He' in the beginning of the paragraph tells that all kinds of lights on the journey, the beginning 'light', 'bright rays', 'continuous and perpetual *light* (τὸ φῶς)' are given by God. 'Light' manifests its origin—God: 'light from the rays of the sun'. The imagery of light is essential for the whole journey at this preliminary stage.

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24 GNO VII/II 77,7–78,1; tr. Hall, *Beatitudes* 23.

25 GNO VII/I 48,19–20; tr. LM, 66.

26 GNO VII/I 57,7–8; tr. LM, 73.

27 GNO V 35,13–15; tr. Heine, *Inscriptions*, 93.

28 GNO VII/I 51,26–52.1; tr. LM, 69.

29 GNO V 44,5–15; tr. Heine, *Inscriptions*, 102.

The Mystical Stage of Moses' Journey

The next part comprises two theophanies (GNO VII/I 82.4–110.2; 110.3–122.5). One of Moses' encounters with God occurs in the darkness, while the other in a cleft in a rock. Both contribute to describing his mystical experience. The divine darkness in *VM* is commonly interpreted as signifying the inaccessiblity of God which separates human beings from God.[30] My following analysis will show that the depiction of the divine darkness in *VM* is also about mystical union.

The Second Theophany: An Encounter with God in Darkness (GNO VII/I 82.4–110.2)

After the preliminary stage Moses enters into the cloud, where he encounters God. Gregory interprets the cloud as 'the inner sanctuary of the divine mystical doctrine (τὸ ἄδυτον τῆς θείας μυσταφωγίας παραδυεὶς)'.[31] In the 'sanctuary' there is total 'darkness' which God makes as 'his hiding place' (Ἔθετο σκότος ἀποκρυφὴν αὐτοῦ).[32] In the 11th homily of *Cant*, Gregory again describes Moses' entering into God's sanctuary as into the divine darkness: 'Leaving behind what is accessible to human nature, the soul goes within the sanctuary of divine knowledge (τῶν ἀδύτων τῆς θεογνωσίας) where she is embraced (διαληφθεῖσα) from all sides by the divine darkness (τῷ θείῳ γνόφῳ).'[33] In *VM*, the divine sanctuary is dark not only because in this place Moses realizes that God is inaccessible, but also because Moses must shed sensual and intellectual perceptions in order to enter into the sanctuary: 'The contemplation of God is not effected by sight and hearing (οὔτε κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον οὔτε κατὰ τὸ ἀκουόμενον ἐνεργεῖται), nor is it comprehended by any of the customary perceptions of the mind (οὔτε

30 See Laird, *Faith*, 49–51; 82–85 (In this book Martin Laird also argues that mystical union is implied in the image of the divine light described in *Cant.*); Laird, *LM*, p. 177, n. 191; H.-Ch. Puech, "La ténèbre mystique chez le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite et dans la tradition patristique", in: *En quête de la Gnose*, Paris 1978, t. 1, 119–141, esp. 136–139; the article appeared originally in *ÉtCarm* 23 (1938), 33–53; Daniélou, *Platonisme*, esp. 175–314; J. Daniélou, "Mystique de la ténèbre chez Grégoire de Nysse", in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Paris 1953, II.2, cols. 1872–1885; Böhm, *Theoria*, 71–74. J. Daniélou, *From Glory to Glory: texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*, New York 1961, 26ff; L. Dupré – J. Wiseman (eds.), *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, Mahwah (NJ) 1988, 46.

31 GNO VII/I 22,7–8; tr. LM, 43.

32 GNO VII/I 87,18–19; tr. LM, 95.

33 GNO VI 323,1–4; translated by myself.

τινὶ τῶν συνήθων ὀνομάτων καταλαμβάνεται).'[34] Moses needs no longer light in the realm of sense and intellect to mediate knowledge of God to him, but he goes out of his own limits and enters into the realm of God. In the dark sanctuary there is no mediating light intervening Moses' contact with God.

Gregory expresses Moses' immediate contact with God in the dark sanctuary in different ways. In *Or. Dom.* III Gregory implies that the contact in the sanctuary is an immediate union. He says that the sanctuary is both 'the innermost part of the Temple (τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ ἐνδότατον)' and 'the hidden inner chamber of our heart (τὸ κρυπτὸν τῆς διανοίας αὐτοῦ ταμεῖον).'[35] The divine place of God and the inner place of human heart are united as one in the dark sanctuary. In *VM* Gregory expresses this direct contact between Moses and God as follows: '[The mind] gains access to the invisible and the incomprehensible (πρὸς τὸ ἀθέατόν τε καὶ ἀκατάληπτον), and there it sees God (τὸν θεὸν ἴδῃ). This is the true knowledge (εἰδησις) of what is sought; this is *the seeing that consists in not seeing* (τὸ ἰδεῖν ἐν τῷ μὴ ἰδεῖν).'[36] By saying 'gains access' and 'sees God', Gregory wants to express that there is a direct contact between Moses and God in the divine darkness. However, this contact is beyond mediation, and thereby this seeing God is realized 'in not seeing'.[37] Similarly, in *Cant* VI Gregory says that the bride who is 'embraced by the divine night (τῇ θείᾳ νυκτὶ) searching him who has been hidden in the darkness (τὸν ἐν τῷ γνόφῳ κεκρυμμένον)'[38] comes to realize finally that the One she is seeking can only be 'known in not knowing'

34 GNO VII/I 84,8–11, tr. LM, 93.
Of course Gregory also mentions darkness signifying the ultimate inaccessibility of God, of 'the divine nature (τὸ τῆς θείας φύσεως) which is uncontemplated (ἀθεώρητον)' in *VM*. (GNO VII/I, 86,20–87,1; tr. LM, 95) Gregory wants to expresses both meanings by the divine darkness: the inaccessibility of God and the transcendence of Moses.

35 GNO VII/II 32,15–7; tr. H. C. Graef (trans.), *St. Gregory of Nyssa The Lord's Prayer; The Beatitudes*, ACW 18, Westminster 1978, 46.

36 GNO VII/I 87,1–9; tr. LM, 95.

37 Laird, *Faith*, 78–85; M. Laird holds the point that the divine darkness implies separation rather than union (*Faith*, 84). He tends to say that mystical union is only clearly present where *faith* as a means of union is mentioned; in *VM* *faith* seldom occurs (faith only appears once in *VM* at its very end), therefore *VM* does not say directly about mystical union (Laird, *Faith*, 83–85). However in my view, the language of *access to God* and *seeing God* are sufficient to show that a mystical union is going on in the divine darkness, although they don't imply the means of union, such as *faith*. It is true that *VM* does not describe mystical union in detail, but it does not mean that *VM* does not mention the union at all.

38 GNO VI 181,13–14; translated by myself.

(τὸ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ μὴ καταλαμβάνεσθαι τί ἐστιν ὅτι ἔστι γινωσκόμενον).[39] 'Seeing in not seeing' and 'knowing in not knowing' tell the same experience of uniting with God beyond mediation in the darkness.[40]

Strange enough is that Gregory then describes Moses' experience in the darkness with images of seeing and hearing, while he says before that in the divine darkness the soul transcends 'sight and hearing'. For example, he describes God's communication as a trumpet and the message of the trumpet as a vision of the tabernacle.[41] What do seeing and hearing in the darkness mean? Of course, what Moses experiences in his union with God cannot be put into language. With the imagery descriptions of Moses' visions, Gregory does not intend to give a literal account of what happened to Moses in the divine darkness. These images are Moses advices to the sensible world according to his experience in the darkness. Gregory says, '. . . he [Moses] is led by it to the place where his intelligence (τῇ διανοίᾳ) lets him slip in where God is (ὅπου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός). This is called darkness (γνόφος) by the Scripture, which signifies, as I said, the unknown and unseen (τὸ ἄγνωστόν τε καὶ ἀθεώρητον). When he arrives there, he sees that tabernacle not made with hands (τὴν ἀχειροποίητον ἐκείνην σκηνήν), which he shows to those below by means of a material likeness (τῆς ὑλικῆς μιμήσεως).'[42] What Moses sees in the darkness is 'tabernacle not made with hands', while imagery depictions are 'a material likeness' of what happened to Moses in the darkness. Although Gregory describes Moses vision in the darkness at length, these descriptions do not say much about the union between Moses and God, except that Moses has experienced God in a way unspeakable.

Notwithstanding, the mixture of seeing and hearing is not without significance. It highlights that the immediacy between God and Moses is beyond any mediation. In the preliminary stage, there is no mention of speaking or hearing. While human beings see God in the light, hearing appears only in the mystical stage. That is because seeing requires the mediation of some figure, or image, while hearing indicates a more intimate relation between two partners, as it refers directly to understanding. Warren Smith reaches the same

39 The English verse 'known in not knowing' is taken from page 88 of the book *Faith* (Laird); The Greek quotation can be found in GNO VI 183,2–3.

40 In *Cant* XI Gregory tells that what the bride knows in 'not knowing' is 'a perception of presence' (αἴσθησιν . . . τινα . . . τῆς παρουσίας) of the Bridegroom (GNO VI 324,10–11). *VM* does not mention this.

41 GNO VII/I 88,13–24; tr. LM, 96. Also GNO VII/I 89,15–97.21; tr. LM, 97–103, describes the vision of the tabernacle.

42 GNO VII/I 89,9–14; tr. LM, 97.

conclusion when commenting on *Cant.*[43] In the 5th homily, the bride hears the voice of the bridegroom when she reaches such a level of moral perfection that she is able to join the perfect bridegroom. Smith concludes, 'The voice of God . . . represents for Nyssen, a truer way of conceiving of God than when we, at a less mature stage of the Christian life, conceived of God largely in corporeal terms.'[44] Similarly in *VM*, Gregory distinguishes two different types of seeing, seeing God spiritually without visible forms as seeing 'tabernacle not made with hands', and seeing the material things as seeing 'a material likeness'.

Furthermore, speaking and hearing signifies a communicational process going on when Moses uniting with God in the divine darkness. This communicational process is pointed out explicitly in the third theophany.

The Third Theophany: Encounter with God in the Cleft of the Rock (GNO VII/I 110.3–122.5)

The third theophany in the cleft of the rock shows that the union between Moses and God is dynamic by nature. Gregory first says that Moses is in a communication with God, and then shows that this communication is a perpetual process.

To show that Moses and God are united in a communicational way, Gregory describes Moses as a partner of God who is in many ways similar to God. Gregory says that Moses shares to some extent the inaccessibility of God, 'Moses was transformed to such a degree of glory (ἐπὶ τὸ ἐνδοξότερον) that the mortal eye could not behold (ἐμγάνειαν) him . . . he becomes inaccessible (ἀποσπέλαστος) to these who would look upon (ὁρῶσι) him.'[45] Then Moses goes into communication with God as a friend: Moses 'saw (ὁρᾶν) God clearly in such divine appearances (τοσαύταις θεοφανείαις)—*face to face* (*ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίῳ*), *as a man speaks* (*λαλήσῃ*) *with his friend.*'[46] Here 'face to face' means sharing in God's Beauty, since Gregory says later 'to enjoy the Beauty not in mirrors and reflections, but face to face (τὸ μὴ διὰ κατόπτρων τινῶν καὶ ἐμφάσεων ἀλλὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον ἀπολαυσαι τοῦ κάλλους)'.[47] Therefore, Moses is a partner to God and at the same time he lives within God's life. In other words, Moses is intimate to God, while the intimacy is realized in a communication with God.

Immediately after mentioning Moses speaking with God face to face, Gregory says that Moses requires that God appears to him as if he never saw

43 Smith, *Passion*, 117.

44 *Ibid.*, 117–188.

45 GNO VII/I 109,7–10; tr. LM, 111.

46 GNO VII/I 110,6–8; tr. LM, 111.

47 GNO VII/I 114,13–14; tr. LM, 114–115.

Him. This contrast highlights that the communication between Moses and God is an unfinished process. Gregory continues to narrate: 'The heavenly voice' (ἡ ἄνωθεν φωνὴ)[48] asks Moses to go into a cleft of the rock; God then covers Moses with His hand when He is passing by, and takes His hand away when He is gone, so that Moses cannot see God's face, but sees His back (ὀπίσθια) instead.[49] Gregory explains that 'the divine voice granted what was requested in what was denied (δι' ὧν ἀπαναίνεται), showing in a few words an immeasurable depth of thought (ἀμέτρητόν τινα βυθὸν νοημάτων).'[50] The back of God is a trace of God; it arouses in Moses a greater desire for God. So God's refusal to Moses is at the same time an invitation. This communication has no end. This on-going character of the dynamic communication between man and God corresponds to the infinite character of God and the perpetual nature of the spiritual progress.

Conclusion

Starting with the double journey in *VM*, we have seen a rupture between the preliminary and the mystical stages of the spiritual journey. The ethical training period that both Moses and the Israelites go through belongs to the preliminary stage. In this stage, human beings come to know God through the mediation of virtue, the words of God, and the example of Moses. The recurrent image of light is the best illustration of the medium of mediation. When Moses and the Israelites come to a personal relation to God, the people of Israel stop their progress on the spiritual journey, while Moses goes into a union with God, which belongs to the mystical stage. He gets in touch with God through a heart to heart communication, knowing God's will beyond seeing, hearing and understanding by the intellect, i.e., beyond any mediation. This immediacy is illuminated in the image of darkness in the second and the third theophanies. Due to God's infinity and human finitude, this mystical period is characterized by the dynamic of the union with God, a constant communication or exchange of love. This dynamics gives a mature form to the idea of *epektasis*.

48 GNO VII/I 110,11; tr. LM, 112.

49 Exodus 33,21–23 (NRSV).

50 GNO VII/I 114,15–17; tr. LM, 115.

Oneness of Mankind and the Plural of Man in Gregory of Nyssa's *Against Eunomius book III*. Some Problems of Philosophy of Language

Marcello La Matina

Preliminary Considerations

After the fundamental contributions by Hübner[1] and Balás,[2] the recent study by Zachhuber[3] on the notion of human nature in Gregory of Nissa represents another important advance in research. The scholar sets out to analyse the terminology related to φύσις. What drives him to treat both univocal expressions—such as, e.g., ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις, or ἡ ἡμετέρα φύσις—and plurivocal expressions, which in many cases are felt as equivalent to the former. For instance, idioms as τὸ ἀνθρώπινον or ὁ ἄνθρωπος are those used most frequently by Gregory. Although the latter do not constitute an explicit reference to 'nature', I believe it was right for Zachhuber to include them in his study. He admits that "*Physis*-terminology is applied to practically all doctrinal topics" (p. 238), but that precisely for this reason, a certain vagueness can be

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1 R. M. Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa. Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der 'physischen' Erlösungslehre*, Leiden 1974; see also the article by R. M. Hübner, "Basilius von Cäsarea und das Homoousios", in: L. R. Wickham – C. P. Bammel (eds), *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Leiden 1993, 70–91.

2 D. L. Balás, *ΜΕΤΟΥΣΙΑ ΘΕΟΥ. Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome 1966. The pivotal work on this topic remains D. L. Balás, "*Plenitudo humanitatis*. The Unity of Human Nature in the Theology of Gregory of Nyssa", in: D. F. Winslow (ed), *Disciplina Nostra. Essays in Memory of Robert F. Evans*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1979, 115–131. Moreover, on the relationship between Basil's and Gregory's concepts of human nature, see also his article "The Unity of human Nature in Basil's and Gregory of Nyssa's Polemics against Eunomius", *StPatr* 14 (1976) 275–281.

3 J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical Background & Theological Significance*, Leiden 2000.

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detected.[4] I am persuaded that in the third book of *Against Eunomius* (hereafter *CE III*) this oscillating terminology might be used by Gregory to say something more than—and different from—the mere ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις. Nevertheless, leaving aside terminological questions, I would rather to look at certain contexts—within and outside *CE III*—where Gregory analyses the logical form of some sentences on both the human and the divine nature. I will refer to one in particular, where the difference might be significant between the plural reference to the concept of Man and the numberless reference to the plurality of Men:[5] i.e. the reference to what Hannah Arendt called the human condition. I consider here as 'human nature' everything that answers the question "what is man", and as 'human condition' everything that answers the question "πῶς ἔχουσι οἱ ἄνθρωποι": "what is now about the plurality of men"?

1 The κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι of Poets and Philosophers

What is man? What is human nature? To answer these questions amounts to fixing a ὅρος, to delineating a boundary. The early Greek poets, like Homer and Mimnermus, were the first to try it, when they compared men to the leaves generated by the spring: frail creatures that the sun causes to sprout (φύει) when its rays grow larger.[6] Epicharmus captured human nature in the iridescence that has always fallen upon every human being.[7] In a Hebrew context, the thoughts

4 Due to such a variance, Zachhuber's *caveat* claims that before any occurrence of a plurivocal idiom 'it will have to be considered in each single case whether and to what extent the equivalence holds and what understanding of human nature the use of these parallel phrases suggests' (Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 13).

5 I will write "Man" when the plural of 'man' as a concept word is meant. I will use the idiom "men" or "the plurality of men" to indicate the sensitive community of men conceived as a matter of the human condition.

6 Mimnermus added that men, like flowers, do feel joy for the short line of time equal to the shadow line traced by the gnomon: 'ἡμεῖς δ', οἷά τε φύλλα φύει πολυάνθεμος ὥρη ἔαρος, ὅτ' αἶψ' αὐγῆις αὔξεται ἠελίου, τοῖς ἴκελοι πήχυιον ἐπὶ χρόνον ἄνθεσιν ἥβης τερπόμεθα, they are left by gods in complete ignorance of what is good and evil: πρὸς θεῶν εἰδότες οὔτε κακὸν οὔτ' ἀγαθόν·'. Semonides did echo such words, as for him introducing, both the explicit reference to Zeus and to the human condition. In his poems men appear not to have *nous*, so sharing the ephemeral existence of flowers; in spite of such a frailty, men are still hoping: νοῦς δ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἀνθρώποισιν, ἀλλ' ἐπήμεροι ἃ δὴ βοτὰ ζόουσιν, οὐδὲν εἰδότες ὅκως ἕκαστον ἐκτελευτήσει θεός. ἐλπὶς δὲ πάντας κἀπιπειθείη τρέφει ἄπρηκτον ὀρμαίνοντας· οἱ μὲν ἡμέρην μένουσιν ἐλθεῖν, οἱ δ' ἐτέων περιτροπάς· (Frg 1).

7 *Fragmenta Epicharmi* 170, 12–16 ὧδε νῦν ὅρη καὶ τὸς ἀνθρώπους· ὃ μὲν γὰρ αὔξεθ', ὃ δέ γα μὰν φθίνει, ἐν μεταλλαγᾶι δὲ πάντες ἐντὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον. ὃ δὲ μεταλλάσσει κατὰ φύσιν κοὔποκ' ἐν ταὐτῶι μένει, ἕτερον εἴη κα τόδ' ἤδη τοῦ παρεξεστακότος.

of the Psalmist were no different. The days of man appeared to him as grass and as flowers in the fields.[8] Even the mind of the sage Qoheleth wore himself searching for a sense to the indefatigable "chase" of the γενεαί: Γενεὰ πορεύεται καὶ γενεὰ ἔρχεται, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιλείπει τὴν φύσιν οὗτος ὁ δρόμος. Essentially, poetic wisdom captured the "term" of nature in the flow of generations, in the constant change that dissipates and collects, accumulates and disperses, without ever producing anything that is truly new: καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν πᾶν πρόσφατον ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον, once again in the words of Qoheleth (*Qohel.* 1,9,3). Using more technical terminology, we would say that the entire field of phenomena appeared to the sages to be innervated with corpuscolar movement, within which, however, no new entity seemed to be able to question the term (the ὅρος) of human life as it was known up till then. Of course, the inkling of invariance was suspected. Nevertheless, on a phenomenic level, the appearance prevailed of unsteadiness in human nature, often capable of assuming features that were extraneous to it, somehow puzzling and alluring. The *what* of man problematically involved the *who* of a given man.

By the way, at a certain point Homer provides a good description of Telemachus' uncertainty faced with the guest welcomed by the swineherd Eumaeus: 'you seemed another (ἀλλοῖος), foreigner, *different* (νέον) from before: you have other clothes and your skin is no longer *the same* (οὐκέθ' ὁμοῖος); or maybe you are a god, of those that have the vast sky' (*Od.* XVI 181–3).[9] Telemachus does not know *who* the guest is, but asks him *what* he is, god or a man. In answering, Odysseus satisfies both curiosities by defining the *who* and the *what* as parts of the same ὅρος: 'I am not *a* god (οὔ τίς τοι θεός εἰμι); why do you rank me with the immortals? But I am *your* father (ἀλλὰ πατὴρ τεός εἰμι)'. So, most frequently the item "new" (νέον) is nothing but another term to just

8 In the Greek of *Septuaginta* the verse sounds as follows: ἄνθρωπος, ὡσεὶ χόρτος αἱ ἡμέραι αὐτοῦ· ὡσεὶ ἄνθος τοῦ ἀγροῦ, οὕτως ἐξανθήσει· (*Ps* 102, 15).

9 Such a terminological fluctuation between humaneness and divineness ought not to be taken as *per se* strange. Already in the opinion of the poet Pindar the race of men and gods was only one, for both of them drew their spirit from the one matrix: Ἓν ἀνδρῶν, ἓν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι· (Pindar, *Nem.* VI 1). Later on, to quote the opinion of the most influential Greek thinker, the early tales—though populated by anthropomorphic characters of gods—were accepted and handed on with the purpose of preserving this germinal truth: the divine item does absorb the whole nature: παραδέδοται δὲ παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ παμπαλαίων ἐν μύθου σχήματι καταλελειμμένα τοῖς ὕστερον ὅτι θεοί τέ εἰσιν οὗτοι καὶ περιέχει τὸ θεῖον τὴν ὅλην φύσιν (Aristot., *Metaph* 1074a.38).

say "different". Novelty is a *likeness* that aims to hide any human changeability under the cipher of the unchangeable divineness.[10]

Greek philosophy, before others, made the definition of ἄνθρωπος stable, by using its "funnel-like" logic of gender, species and difference. Consequently, Aristotle's categories did allow reabsorbing that iridescence poets were enthused by: the plural of men was shortened into the paradigmatic singular of the concept "Man". However, the transition from the *wisdom-like* ὅρος to the *philosophy-like* one—equalizing in fact "the plural of ἄνθρωπος" to "the plurality of men"—was not free from discontinuity. Something undoubtedly was left out. The former, more ancient, ὅρος had attempted to imprison the human condition under the species of a διάστημα, i.e. of a diachronic sequence. Still centuries later, Eunomius' insistence on the bond between process (γέννησις) and essence or substance (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ ἡ οὐσία τοῦ πράγματος) might be read as a remnant of this 'botanical' sense of the concept of φύσις. I am of the opinion that the permanence of a conceptual link between the φύσις as a process and the φύσις as a result of the process in part prevented the second ὅρος—that of the great philosophical schools of Antiquity—from managing to reduce the phenomenic variance of human space to the aseptic uniformity of a concept. But wherever this reductionist breakthrough had success, it succeeded in minimising (or in completely hiding) the existence of an ontological difference between the plural of Man and the plurality of men. Let us look at an example of this reduction to one. Aristotle opens his *Metaphysics* with the following utterance (*Metaph* 982a.12):

> Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει.

The current translation of it is 'All men by nature desire to know', but, for the sake of simplicity, suppose we are permitted to translate it as 'All men are by nature knowledgeable'. First, it might be expedient to distinguish the grammatical form of the sentence from that of logic and semantics. Grammarians might take "All men are by nature knowledgeable" as a sentence about a plural subject, whilst logicians do not. Bertrand Russell provocatively explained why:

10 Especially meaningful is *à propos* the answer given by Telemachos to the unknown guest: "οὐ σύ γ' Ὀδυσσεύς ἐσσι πατὴρ ἐμός, ἀλλά με δαίμων θέλγει, ὄφρ' ἔτι μᾶλλον ὀδυρόμενος στεναχίζω. οὐ γάρ πως ἄν θνητὸς ἀνὴρ τάδε μηχανόῳτο ᾧ αὐτοῦ γε νόῳ, ὅτε μὴ θεὸς αὐτὸς ἐπελθὼν ῥηϊδίως ἐθέλων θείη νέον ἠδὲ γέροντα. ἦ γάρ τοι νέον ἦσθα γέρων καὶ ἀεικέα ἕσσο· νῦν δὲ θεοῖσιν ἔοικας, οἳ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι." (*Od* XVI, 194–200).

> We may ask, as suggested by the above discussion, what is to be said of the objects denoted by *a man*, *every man*, *some man*, and *any man*. Are these objects one or many or neither? Grammar treats them all as one. But to this view, the natural objection is, which one? Certainly not Socrates, nor Plato, nor any other particular person. Can we conclude that no one is denoted . As well might we conclude that every one is denoted, which in fact is true of the concept *every man*.[11]

Russell argues that our standard grammatical conception is *singularist*, whilst the logical form of a categorical statement—like the present one—does not account for either a reference to a single man or to a plurality of men. Still better, expressions of generality—like *a man*, *every man*, *some man*, and *any man*—are not capable to establish any reference to individual thing(-s).[12] Everything happens as if *a singularist bias* should pervade any standard description of ordinary language.[13] Let us take again the proposition 'All men are by nature knowledgeable'. It seems to be about humans or about mankind, for its grammatical subject is "All men"; it also seems to be a proposition about a plurality of human beings, *i.e.* about a number of individuals wider than one. On the contrary, from a logical point of view, *Metaphysics*'s opening sentence has the following form: "For any x, if x is a-man, then x is a-knowledgeable <nature>"; still better, in a quasi-formalization:

$$(\forall x)\ (\text{is-a-man}, x) \supset (\text{is-a-knowledgeable } \langle\text{nature}\rangle, x).$$

No trace of any subjects is to be found here: the pivotal cell is the Concept Word ("Man", "Knowledgeable Nature") with its blank to fill in. Moreover, despite the presence of the universal quantifier "$(\forall x)$", "(for all x, such that . . .)", we cannot properly say that the proposition is about a *given* number of men. Paraphrasing a passage by the logician Gottlob Frege, one might say that just apparently the sentence in parole "All men are by nature knowledgeable" seems to be about men; but if one wonders which man are we speaking of, we are unable to point

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11 B. Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, Cambridge 1903, §75.

12 This argument is to be found also in G. Frege, *Grundlagen der Arithmetik. Eine logisch-mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl*, Breslau 1884; *The Foundations of Arithmetic. A logico-mathematical enquiry into the concept of number* (tr. J. L. Austin), New York 1950, 2nd rev. edition, § 47, 60.

13 On such a bias, see the article by B. Yi, "The Logic and Meaning of Plurals Part I", *JPL* 34 (2005) 459–506.

to any one in particular. Even imagining groups of men are before us, Aristotle's sentence still does not state anything about them.[14]

Our previous remarks were focused on the relationship between meaning and logical form; as the next step one might wonder: "What could be said on the truth conditions for the sentence in parole?" The logical form reveals what the grammatical one was hiding: not only is it not a question of an utterance on given men, but nor is it a sentence concerning a given plurality of men. Indeed, the predicate 'Man' is satisfied distributively by any individual *x*, such that *x* is a man. Thus, if we imagine that there was one single man on the earth, the utterance would still be true. This means first that (a) the sentence says nothing about plurality and about the plural world of men—rather, it deals with the "Man" and "Knowledgeable" pair of concepts. Moreover it means that (b) within the range of the concept of Man, the *n*th item of a given sequence of men is only a token of the first Man-*x*. The analysis of 'All men by nature desire to know' thus comes to show that here the point cannot be neither the humaneness of Man nor the Man as a set of individuals. Even in the form of a universal quantification, Aristotle's sentence does not refer to the "being together" of some plurality of men. Consequently, I shall suggest that *in any utterance with the quantifier* "$(\forall x)$" *it is such a being-together of men that remains unthought*. What is the logical space for this *being-together*? Hannah Arendt termed it as the *infra* or the *in-between*. Moreover, she recalled how easily philosophy and theology deal with Man, so that 'men are reduced to a nothing more than a more or less successful replica of Man'.[15]

Anyway, this *singularist bias* should not be attributed to logic, which contrarywise acquaints us with the prejudice and tries to correct it. It is true, however, that with the advent of conceptual thinking, literate peoples would only speak of Man in the singular, and thus transmit a singularist attitude even to the life sciences like zoology and botany. At the very beginning of philosophy Aristotle theorized that ὁ γὰρ τὶς ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν (*Cat* 3a.19). Now, let us wonder whether Man does absorb the plurality of men. Or let us evaluate whether the difference between plural and singular ought to be taken such narcotizable a feature that its concealment can not damage our knowledge. In a very often quoted passage of her *Denktagebücher* Hannah Arendt[16] denied it, claiming that the very plural space within "men" could not be reduced to the logical space between the individuals of a species. Logically speaking, I might suggest that, when mankind is concerned, both the nature and the condition

14 Frege, *Grundlagen*, 60. Italics mine.

15 H. Arendt, *Tagebücher*, frg. 1, August 1950 (handwritten).

16 H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, London 1958.

of ἄνθρωπος do not overlap each other. The natural unity of Man, the only ἀνθρωπότης, which is really evident in the philosophical definition of nature, sacrifices the plurality of men: that variance that emerged from the song of poets. It is possible for it to be recovered as long as it captures the nature of man and the human condition together, differentiating them at the same time. The work of the Cappadocians, with their semantic and ontological distinction between substance and hypostasis, will play a crucial role in this affair.

2 The κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι and Gregory's Pensiveness

Gregory of Nyssa can be considered as the philosopher who more plainly than others was able to rethink and reconcile the two ὅροι of man, that of wisdom and that of philosophy. It was Balás[17] who realised that Gregory conceived of human nature as the result of two aspects, one *intensive* and the other *extensive*.[18] Within the first one might count the fact that human nature is something unitary that can be found in the same way in every member of the class of men; within the second one counts the fact that human nature consists of the totality of all the members that belong to the human species. From a logical point of view it is easy to envisage in Balás' terminology the likeness of the semantic couple *intensional* vs *extensional*. If this parallel is true, the intension (with the *s*) of "Man" includes all the properties that an object must / can possess in order that "This here is a man" to be true of that object. The extension is the set whose members are men, regardless of their number or provenance. Obviously, the question here about the criteria for including or excluding something from a set is the crucial one. If someone asks "why is Peter a man?" his question is taken as a request to specify whether Peter's insertion into the set of men (in the extension of 'men') is motivated or not by the attribution of certain properties that are considered part of the intension of 'man'. We usually agree about these aspects because our language (or an author's vocabulary) is

17 D. Balás, "*Plenitudo humanitatis*", 116–26.

18 Hereafter I will use the "intensional" *vs* "extensional" pair according to their current usage in both logic and philosophy of language. To find the germinal sense of the distintion, see G. Frege, "Über Sinn und Bedeutung", *ZPPK* 100 (1892) 25–50. An articulated reconstruction of both the historical and of philosophical background of Frege's corresponding couple of *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*, was made by E. Picardi, *La chimica dei concetti. Linguaggio, Logica, Psicologia: 1879–1927*, Bologna 1994, 109–80.

largely made up of meaning postulates[19] that are broadly stipulational. Now, if Balás and Zachhuber simply had taken Gregory's account of human nature as a stipulational one, their result would be not but a platitude, for denotation is usually a matter of stipulation.[20] However, I think theirs is not a platitude. Albeit with some basic differences, Balás' and Zachhuber's remarks did entail that terms like 'man' or 'human being' can *effectually* be predicated of any individual whose properties exemplify distributively as well as cumulatively the given concept. The *symbolic effectiveness* of such a predication depends on the fact that all the individuals *do* share in a given nature and—I now add—a given plural condition. A passage from Zachhuber's item[21] could be quoted as supporting my claim:

> The fact that the same concept "human being" can be predicated of all thus signifies that *all share in a particular nature*, whose cumulative characteristics correspond to this concept. This common nature is the cause not only of the fact that each individual is a human being, but also of the fact that *all humans form a common species* [my Italics].

This means that, as regarding its application to mankind, φύσις-terminology is neither devoid of ontological profoundness (i.e. it is not μάταιον)[22] nor solely distributive, but it points at something not quite divisible. Zachhuber is right defending both the distributive application of the concept "human being" and the cumulative scope of it. However, he is perhaps wrong taking the "common species" of humans as a matter of just human *nature*. If I am right interpreting his dictum, then terms like 'human being', 'man' or 'τὸ ἀνθρώπινον' do work,

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19 Carnap claimed that analytic assertions are those which can be derived from sets of special sentences that he termed "meaning postulates". Cf. the paper "Meaning postulates", *Philosophical Studies* III (1952) 65–73; now in *Meaning and Necessity: a Study in Semantics and Modal Logic*, Chicago 1956, [1]1947, 222–229.

20 Except for the so called exemplificational languages theorized by N. Goodman, *Languages of Art*, Indianapolis 1968. See also M. La Matina, "Esemplificazione, Riferimento e Verità", in: E. Franzini – M. La Matina (eds.), *Nelson Goodman, la filosofia e i linguaggi*, Roma, Macerata 2007, 109–155.

21 L. F. Mateo Seco – G. Maspero (eds), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, *cit.*, *s.v.* 'Physis'.

22 This is correct, provided, of course, that μάταιον—as Gregory claims in *Eccl.* (GNO V 281,4)—means 'thing having its being in the mere accomplishment of a speech act' (ὃ ἐν μόνῃ τῇ τοῦ ῥήματος προφορᾷ τὸ εἶναι ἔχει). On the contrary, Eunomius takes all things belonging to the analytic sphere of language, *i.e.*, everything intended "κατ' ἐπίνοιαν", as very close to the notion of μάταιον.

at least through the *CE III*, as *mass terms*:[23] namely, they do not divide their reference. From a certain point of view, the semantics of 'τὸ ἀνθρώπινον' looks like that of 'sand' (ψάμμος). However, one might doubt whether such a "mass-termed" oneness of Man is a necessary *and* sufficient condition for the oneness of Men. It is my opinion that Gregory's semantics of *CE III* might provide some important clues about what men *do share in*. Is it a particular nature—as Zachhuber claims—or a particular condition, or both?

I envisage two different ways men might share in their humaneness. The first one is *in absentia*: Let us take the human being as that particular nature involved in the original sin. No plural of men as such is necessary for Adam's fall to have an effect on all men of every time: men do share in their nature *in absentia*. Let's now imagine single human beings as addressees of Jesus new commandment. In this case no sharing in love can succeed unless single human beings do share a plural condition *in praesentia* of each other. Human nature can thus be shared *in absentia*, whilst the human condition cannot, for this latter does request a co-existing plurality of men. Of course, sharing *in praesentia* is also a matter of performing—and not only of possessing—one's own humaneness. There is something indexical and environmental in such a plural of men. This is why, in point of logic, it is preferable not to count the "cumulative characteristics" of men among the *Eigenschaften* of the "human being" concept. In the affirmative, the existence of a plurality of men (rather than of just a man) would be irrelevant, in order to envisage what Men are in their co-essence. In my opinion the Plural of Men is not a character of the *Begriff* 'Man', but a way of existence of men. Namely, it is a way committing to a relational ontology. It is now possible to come back to certain pages which are useful to this discussion and to the defence of the current thesis. In *Adversus Graecos*,[24] Gregory presents—without particularly developing it—an observation that has the merit of summarizing the *wisdom-like* account of human condition as well as the *philosophy-like* one, as we call them. Seeking to explain why Peter and Paul and Barnabas are *three* men (Πέτρον καὶ Παῦλον καὶ Βαρνάβαν τρεῖς φαμὲν ἀνθρώπους), Gregory argues that the plural term 'men' is usually used incorrectly, and indicates two causes of this. The first is that the ὅρος of

23 By *mass terms* those expressions are meant, whose reference is *cumulative*; see, as an instance, 'water' or 'bread'. Such predicates do not pluralize and, nevertheless, cannot be assimilated to singular terms, because their purpose is not that of naming single objects. Accurate analyses of this notion were made by N. Goodman, *The Structure of Appearance*, Cambridge Mass. 1954, 49–52, and W. V. O. Quine, *Word and Object*, Cambridge Mass. 1960, 91–95.

24 One may read the entire passage in G. Nys., *Graec.* (GNO III/1 24,1–25,24).

man (ὁ ὅρος ὁ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) is not always reckoned on the basis of the same individuals: men die (τῶν μὲν γὰρ προτέρων τελευτώντων) and others are formed *in their place* (ἕτερα ἀντ᾽ αὐτῶν συνίσταται); furthermore, some survive, and others come to be added to the former ones. Therefore, the ὅρος, the definition of Man comes to be computed on the basis of instances unequal as for both number (ποτὲ μὲν ἐν πλείοσιν, ποτὲ δὲ ἐν ὀλιγωτέροις) and location of some pivotal point (ποτὲ μὲν ἐν τούτοις, ποτὲ δὲ ἐν ἐκείνοις) of the accounted sets or groups. The second cause is that not all human instances derive from the same ancestor in a direct way (πάλιν τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πρόσωπα πάντα οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ προσώπου κατὰ τὸ προσεχὲς ἔχει τὸ εἶναι).[25] By metaphor, this remark harbours the "philological" concern regarding the alterations that can be seen when a plurality of ancestors is involved, say, in a family of manuscripts instead of just one.

Many other things strike us when we read Gregory's dense page, but one most of all; it is when he says, once the former men have died, *others are formed in their place* (ἕτερα ἀντ᾽ αὐτῶν συνίσταται). By using this expression it was as if Gregory was thinking of a kind of balance between demographic growth and decline, between the number of deaths and births (τῆς τε προσθήκης καὶ τῆς ἀφαιρέσεως τῆς τε ἀποβιώσεως καὶ γεννήσεως τῶν ἀτόμων). And it is as if, beyond the coming and going of the γενεαί, Gregory had glimpsed a kind of stability in the human creature—not comparable, of course, with the perfect steadiness of the divine Trinity, but nevertheless connected with it. Gregory's complete answer to the question is thus as follows: the term 'Man' is true of many and scattered objects, but it remains one and singular, only when it is used *quā* predicate (*i.e.* as a descriptive term and not καταχρηστικῶς καὶ οὐ κυρίως).[26] Now, the use of ἄνθρωπος as a Concept-Word justifies the formula "τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἓν καὶ πολλὰ οὐ δύναται εἶναι", which Gregory ends his argumentation by. Thus, to return to the above quoted example: Peter, Paul and Barnabas are, as

25 It must perhaps be added that, in the quoted passage, Gregory mentions the οὐσία and πρόσωπα differentiation, so that his analysis results very fine and admirable as to his doctrine. Moreover, he focuses here the notion itself of ὅρος, comparing the theoretical account (τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον) of both the term 'Man' and the term 'God'.

26 The fact that a distinction is possible between correct *vs* uncorrect use of terms presupposes that Gregory does not accept as a valid account of the sentential logic the so-called *two-terms theory*; I have dealt with this matter in a previous paper, whom readers are referred: M. La Matina, "God is not the name of God. Some Remarks on Language and Philosophy in Gregory's Opera Dogmatica Minora", in: V. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism, Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008*), SVigChr 106, Leiden, Boston 2011, 315–335.

regards being Man, one and not many (ἔστι δὲ Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος καὶ Βαρνάβας ὁμολογουμένως κατὰ τὸ ἄνθρωπος εἷς ἄνθρωπος·). However, from the above mentioned words ("in their place", "ἀντ᾽ αὐτῶν") the idea seems to emerge that individuals do not succeed each other like the γενεαί, but that they replace each other within some kind of structure.[27] The question now arises, "What allows man to survive his finitude *quā* species?" If every individual is, at once, the every man and the whole man, *who* or *what* fixes the permanence of men *quā* species? Gregory's response in *Ad Graecos* is clear: relations between human beings—*i.e.* humans in their *being-together*—do appear at first as accidents internal to the ὅρος of Man; conversely,

> it is not so in the divine Triad, which always resides in the same πρόσωπα, in identical relation to each other, without a new πρόσωπον ever being born (so that a Triad becomes a Tetrad) or any of the Three ever dying, so that in the twinkling of an eye the Triad becomes a Diad.[28]

Therefore the source of the balance between individual and species must not be sought in the natural constitution of Man, but in the relations and in the special homology between Trinity and Man. But take note: homology and not analogy:[29] if it were so, Man would be able to construct his own Trinity

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27 In order to find a consideration comparable, as for profoundness, to this one made by Gregory, it must reach our times. Namely, I think here of C. Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage*, Paris 1962, where the anthropologist counterposes synchrony and diachrony, system and history, explaining their conflictuality as a quest for a balance between structural principles and demographic chance. See the English edition *The Savage Mind*, Chicago 1966, 66 ff. Out of curiosity, it is expedient to remind that the *pensée sauvage* is first the so called Tricolours Violet (*Viola Tricolor*), also called *the Trinity Flower*.

28 Such an homology between the finitude of the human ὅρος and the lawlikeness of the divine Triad possesses the inflection of a hymn: 'ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον συμβαίνει ποτέ· δεῖ γὰρ τὰ αὐτὰ πρόσωπα καὶ οὐχ ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα λέγεσθαι ἀεὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχοντα μήτε προσθήκην τινὰ δεχόμενα τὴν εἰς τετράδα μήτε μείωσιν τὴν εἰς δυάδα· (οὔτε γὰρ γεννᾶται ἢ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ ἐξ ἑνὸς τῶν προσώπων πρόσωπον ἕτερον, ὥστε καὶ τετράδα εἶναί ποτε τὴν τριάδα· οὔτε τελευτᾷ ποτε ἓν τῶν τριῶν τούτων προσώπων κἂν ὡσεὶ ῥοπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ὥστε δυάδα τὴν τριάδα γενέσθαι κἂν τῇ ἐνθυμήσει·)'. Zachhuber thinks of analogy *tout court* between Mankind and Trinity, though, further on, he specifies that, the expression must be intended as a "*logical* analogy", with reference to the "comparison of Father and Son to human parent and offspring", (Zachhuber, J., *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa, Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, SVigChr 46, Leiden, Boston, Köln 2000, 55, 56, author's italics).

29 Our last statement risks to become false, if the word *analogia* is intended not according to Greek meaning, but in the intimistic sense Augustine gave it (*e.g.*, *De Trinit.*, XIII 3, 5)

next to—or *without*—the divine Trinity. Alternatively, he could build on the social level what the Trinity is on the ontological level. However, the stabilization of the human ὅρος is impossible without God himself being part of it, particularly the Only-Begotten, the Word made flesh. The parallel between the three men and the three Divine Persons—that Gregory fully develops in *Ad Ablabium*[30]—*is thus not a social analogy but a structural homology.* In other words the counterposition does not serve *in this case* to show the similarities but to pinpoint, by difference, the homological character which requires relations between the πρόσωπα in each series, without postulating a biunivocal correspondence between them (a correspondence that would prove to be impossible, as we can gather from the words of Gregory, providing that the elements of the divine relation are permanent, whilst those of the human one constantly change their individuative properties).[31] Ancient grammarians may have called this type of homology ἀντιτυπία.

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or in the sociological sense, which is prevalent in many of today's scholars. The biblical meaning was already fixed in the Greek of the *Septuaginta*: see *e.g.*: ἐκ γὰρ μεγέθους καὶ καλλονῆς κτισμάτων ἀναλόγως ὁ γενεσιουργὸς αὐτῶν θεωρεῖται (*Sap.* 13,5). The majority of Greek Fathers accepted this meaning. Later on, evidently, the semantics of analogy and homology became troubled. Readers looking for a discussion of the psychologist presuppositions of *analogia* might see: S. J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self. A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*, Louisville Kentucky 2001. See especially 30–34.

30 A measured interpretation of such a relevant trinitarian treatise was given by G. Maspero, *La Trinità e l'uomo. L'Ad Ablabium di Gregorio di Nissa*, Roma 2005, now published in English as *Trinity and Man*, Leiden 2007. Although Maspero does not dispute the legitimacy of "social analogy-terminology", he complains about frequent misunderstandings of this formula, namely the ones aiming at bending the trinitarian relations to easy psychologistic readings. The attempt by Maspero is also convincing, when he tries to reconstruct a comprehensive view of Gregory's framework, by integrating in a unique picture many fields of patristic researches, as, for example, semantics, ontology of relation, ontology of gift, dogmatic theology, theology of icons, and so on.

31 One could read yet in *Graec.* 'τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πρόσωπα πάντα οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ προσώπου κατὰ τὸ προσεχὲς ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἐκ τούτου, τὰ δὲ ἐξ ἐκείνου ὡς πολλὰ καὶ διάφορα εἶναι πρὸς τοῖς αἰτιατοῖς καὶ τὰ αἴτια. ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος οὐχ οὕτως· ἓν γὰρ πρόσωπον καὶ τὸ αὐτό, τοῦ πατρός, ἐξ οὗπερ ὁ υἱὸς γεννᾶται καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκπορεύεται. διὸ δὴ καὶ κυρίως τὸν ἕνα αἴτιον μετὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ αἰτιατῶν ἕνα θεόν φαμεν τεθαρρηκότως, ἐπειδὴ καὶ συνυπάρχει αὐτοῖς.'

3 The Emergence of the Human Condition from the Sand of Qoheleth

'Ματαιότης ματαιοτήτων, says Qoheleth, τὰ πάντα ματαιότης.' (*Eccles* 1,2). Gregory comments on the *incipit* of the famous book with the very eyes of the mysterious "gatherer".[32] Here too he encounters a nagging obstacle, a piece that does not fit into the κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι scheme of categories.[33] Now Gregory takes a look at the main actors of sensorial life, the sun with its rays, the sea with its waves, to theorize that everything moves, but this movement always occurs within its boundaries, within its term. Gregory plays with the word ὅρος, saying that "everything is always within its terms" (ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις ἕκαστον μένον ὅροις) and then straight afterwards "the path of the sun has no terms" (ὁ συντεταμένος οὗτος τοῦ ἡλίου δρόμος ὅρον οὐκ ἔχει). In this way Gregory echoes the game of opposites that is peculiar to Qoheleth's sensitivity: how can it be true that "nothing stays the way it is now" if it is true, at once, that "What has happened will always happen."?[34] The human (τὸ ἀνθρώπινον) upon whom Gregory-Qoheleth meditates here is not only synonymous with ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις, but also appears to refer to the world that man inhabits along with things and other human beings. It is not a οὐσία or a τί ἐστιν that Gregory often shows us, but the non-conceptual space of the human condition: πῶς ἔχουσι οἱ ἄνθρωποι. The life of men is *not only nature,* even in the rich sense that we discovered through the pages of Balás and Zachhuber. The notion of human nature does not include the space that is generated by the interaction of men between each other in the space of language, of things and of action: what Hannah Arendt called it "the *in-between*" or the *infra* of men. This space is the world and it is principally the place of the plurality of men, of language and of action.[35] The human condition is a historical dimension, whilst the nature of Man is not. The former, but not the latter, begins with the Adam's fall.

With Adam the ἁμαρτία enters the world, comes into contact with the nature of man and corrupts τὸ ἀνθρώπινον. What is the human after sin? Jesus shared

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32 According to the tradition reliable at Gregory's times, the name Ecclesiastes was interpreted as having the meaning of "the Gatherer": in a full sense such an interpretation hints to Jesus. See Greg. Nyss., *Eccl.* (GNO V 280,8–11), where he explains the name as follows: 'ὁ γὰρ ἀληθινὸς ἐκκλησιαστὴς ὁ τὰ ἐσκορπισμένα συνάγων εἰς ἓν πλήρωμα καὶ τοὺς πολλαχῇ κατὰ τὰς ποικίλας ἀπάτας πεπλανημένους εἰς ἕνα σύλλογον ἐκκλησιάζων'.

33 Following M. Canévet (*Grégoire de Nysse et l'hermenéutique biblique*, Paris 1983) I take the date of composition of these homilies as prior to that of *CE III*.

34 The sentence is indeed formulated as an amoebic chain with help of the reduplication of some items: 'μένει δὲ οὐδὲν εἰς ἀεὶ τοιοῦτον, οἷον ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἐστίν', Τί τὸ γεγονός; αὐτό, φησί, τὸ γενησόμενον· καὶ τί τὸ πεποιημένον; αὐτό, φησί, τὸ ποιηθησόμενον. *Eccl.* (GNO V 294,19)

35 Cfr. H. Arendt, *The Human condition*, 52 ff.

the human in everything except ἁμαρτία. But what did it change? Could sin, which is without substance, have changed human nature? Or did it change the human condition? Gregory shows that the fallen man was taken by an ἀβουλία, indeed he fell because such a sort of *abulia* (ἐξ ἀβουλίας ἐμπεπτωκότα)[36] that drove him towards what is the opposite of good (γέγονε δὲ διὰ τῆς ἀβουλίας ἡμῖν δύναμις τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἐναντίον ῥοπῆς); thus, his soul, which is not sin, takes in sin because of this ἀβουλία: ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἁμαρτία οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ δεκτικὴ ἁμαρτίας ἐξ ἀβουλίας ἐγένετο·). From Adam onwards the nature of men is ψάμμος "sand", because the entry of sin introduced a διάστημα between the mere human nature and its plural condition. As Gregory himself states, sin multiplies by generations, dividing and distributing itself into individual men.[37] This multiplicative splitting of human nature—and not nature in itself—generates the human condition after Adam. If it were not so, how could the Fathers say that evil lacks any hypostasis?[38] Gregory here is trying to understand what Qoheleth himself would have wanted to understand: "How unsubstantiality came into the world (πῶς εἰσῆλθεν ἡ ματαιότης)"? "How what is without consistence was able to prevail (πῶς ἐπεκράτησε τὸ ἀνύπαρκτον)"? "What type of power is the power of non-existence (τίς ἡ δυναστεία τοῦ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος)"?[39] Does φύσις-terminology maybe contain notions like ambition (ἡ φιλοτιμία), power (ἡ δυναστεία), wealth (ὁ πλοῦτος), and gradually each thing, from which we carefully draw enjoyment through the flesh, (ἕκαστον τῶν κατὰ σπουδὴν διὰ σαρκὸς ἀπολαυομένων·)?[40] It does not, for such notions refer to disorders *among* individuals. Insofar as these disorders are born in the plural space between Man and Men, between men and things, these notions are referable to the plurality of human condition, just as Gregory could have thought. Since sin entered the world—one might resume—the cumulative characteristics of Men (as plural) became into conflict with the concept of Man (as singleton).

The reference to enjoyment too, which is so frequent in Qoheleth, is not accidental or rhetorical. It is precisely in enjoyment (ἀπόλαυσις), in the time

36 Cfr. also *CE* I 545.7, where it is said εἰ πρός τι κακὸν ἐξ ἀβουλίας τῶν χρωμένων ἀπάγει τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

37 Cfr. *Trid. spat.* (GNO IX 283,17–21): ταῖς διαδοχαῖς ἡ κακία συνεπλατύνετο καὶ ὁ κακὸς τῆς πονηρίας πλοῦτος εἰς τοὺς καθ' ἕκαστον μεριζόμενος δι' ἑκάστου μείζων ἐγίνετο; καὶ οὕτω πολυγονοῦσα συνδιεξῄει ταῖς ἀεὶ ἐπιγινομέναις γενεαῖς ἡ κακία χεομένη τῷ πλήθει πρὸς ἄπειρον.

38 About evil's weakness of hypostasis Gregory, as well as other fathers, is very explicit. See, e.g. the costringence of the following argument: τὸ γὰρ κακὸν ἀνυπόστατον, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχει, τὸ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὂν οὐδὲ ἔστι πάντως κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν φύσιν (*Eccl.* [GNO V 300,22]).

39 *Eccl.* (GNO V 300,18–301,2).

40 *Eccl.* (GNO V 290,7–9).

dilatation (λαιμαργία) experienced by the desiring subject, dissipation and homeostasis coincide. There are no longer current things, just their memory and their expectation: Τί τὸ γεγονός; αὐτό, φησί, τὸ γενησόμενον· καὶ τί τὸ πεποιημένον; αὐτό, φησί, τὸ ποιηθησόμενον. (*Hom. in Ecclesiasten* V 294,19). Nevertheless, nothing of what we can experience in the world is such as to appear as a new fact or a new instance of something; thus Qoheleth must conclude (but retrospectively) that everything to him appears "old": "ὅτι ἔξω τοῦ ἀρχαίου ἐστὶν οὐδέν. Οὐκ ἔστι γάρ, φησί, πᾶν πρόσφατον ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον, ὡς ἂν εἰ ἔλεγεν, ὅτι εἴ τι μὴ κατὰ τὸ ἀρχαῖόν ἐστιν, οὐδὲ ἔστιν ὅλως, ἀλλὰ νομίζεται." Gregory, who until now has accompanied the solitary voice of Qoheleth, now enters into counterpoint with it and reaches a conclusion that is startling in its simplicity: In a world characterized by fluxes and dissipations that are incapable of producing stability, or even of creating real instability, *real new cases never occur*, only replicas of cases registered in the past.

The use of 'τὸ ἀνθρώπινον' is highly relevant in many cases, specially taken from *CE III*. Its semantic ambiguity is not a limit, as much as a gauge of the complexity of Gregory's thinking on the Incarnation. At stake here is no longer only Qoheleth's man, who lives in his hoxymoron-like condition of permanent dissipation; here the "condition of servant" is called into play, the μορφὴ δούλου. Commenting the problematic sentence of *Prov* 8:22, Gregory observes how clearly the sense of that expression is referred to τὸ ἀνθρώπινον (πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἡ τοῦ 'ἔκτισέ με' διάνοια βλέπει):[41] it is thus a sentence of the *oeconomia*. As will be said later, the theological question "*What the referent of the description is?*" does not count here, but the question "*What would the speaker be attributing to that predicate on this occasion?*" This can be satisfied even *without any backing of description*, as it concerns the pragmatic use and not the preordained theological semantics of a language.[42] This becomes clearer later on, in the same book,[43] where the expression appears in a context of enunciation that regards another problematic statement (*Acts* 2:36), of we will speak in detail *infra*. A few pages later we find another occurence of the syntagm in parole. This time the reference is to a crucial element of the human condition assumed by Jesus: the proper name itself, *i.e.* the marker that assigns each man a set in the diachronic sequence of his ancestors and in the synchronic chains of his relationships.[44] Again in *CE III*, other occurences follow, always linked to

41 *CE* III 1 52,1.

42 This explication takes into account the theory of definite descriptions built up by K. Donnellan, "Proper Names and Identifying Descriptions", *Synthese* 21 (1970) 335–358.

43 *CE* III 3 16,17.

44 *CE* III 3 42,7.

social traits and never to defining aspects. The humbleness of the human condition is mentioned (τί δὲ τὸ ταπεινὸν εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον;), that Christ assumes and that is raised to the divine rank (τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ὁ ἀπόστολος ὑψῶσθαι λέγει, ὑψώθη δὲ διὰ τοῦ 'κύριος καὶ Χριστὸς' γενέσθαι.). Reference is made to the condition of God living in the *in-between* of the plurality of men; and furthermore, there are references to the indexical and perceptive elements that accompany the human talk (τῇ δεικτικῇ φωνῇ πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον αὐτοῦ καὶ βλεπόμενον πᾶσιν ἐπερειδόμενος), up to the introduction of the notion of *oeconomia* (περὶ δὲ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἡ κατὰ τὸ πάθος οἰκονομία). In short, there is a sort of *climax*, where Gregory progressively diminishes the importance of the facts of mere human nature, in order to shape a lexicon that is less certain, but which is capable of paving the way—also through human language—to the Logos made flesh. This *praeparatio* is a way to πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἄγειν τὸν λόγον (*CE III*, 4, 62, 8).

It is in such sentences that, I believe, expressions like 'τὸ ἀνθρώπινον' must not be heard as mere synonyms of human nature. In diagnostic cases they contribute towards the building of utterances with a vague meaning, but more complex. I consider it possible that Gregory, through his qoheletic meditation, starts realising that Man cannot be conceived of in a logical or theological space which excludes the condition of plurality of men, on the one hand, and the mystery of the economy of suffering (ἡ κατὰ τὸ πάθος οἰκονομία), on the other, which places it in relation with the divine. The really human element is therefore not mere nature, but the fact that men live in the world in a commixture with the elements and making a life with them. The στοιχεῖα of the world are the analogue of the elements which human nature consists of. Just as the former ones do exist in the conflict between fluxes of elements and homeostasis of the system, so the latter ones does not come to us in its conceptual purity, but in the continual decomposition of the synchronic chain produced by diachronic sequences. Here is maybe another aspect of the human condition:

> Since things [*scil.* the στοιχεῖα, with which the life of men passes (ἐν οἷς ἐστιν ἡ ζωὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων)] are thus, the question arises, "What elements does the human condition likely consist to (ἐν τίσιν εἰκὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον εἶναι), since it has its life amongst these things (ὃ ἐν τούτοις τὴν ζωὴν ἔχει)? And why are we astonished if "One generation goes and one comes" and this progression does not overlook nature (καὶ οὐκ ἐπιλείπει τὴν φύσιν οὗτος ὁ δρόμος), so that a generation of men always manages to nullify the preceding one just to be annihilated by the one that follows it?

Gregory's *Nachdenklichkeit* appears in certain somewhat *fuzzy* terminology, which is only hinted at here. The impression of uncertainty may be due to the

fact that the Nyssen is passing from a semantics of entities and properties to a semantics of personal events. Or else it is due to the fact that Gregory is passing from the old instance of Qoheleth's man, always the same as himself, to the true instance of a new man. Let us read again—this time shifting the voices: Qoheleth had said "Οὐκ ἔστι γάρ πᾶν πρόσφατον ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον"; now Gregory is saying: "οὐ γὰρ ἔστι, φησί, πρόσφατόν τι ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον, ὥστε λαλῆσαί τινα καὶ δεῖξαί τι τῶν ἐπιγενομένων, ὅτι καινόν ἐστι τοῦτο καὶ τῷ ὄντι ὑφέστηκεν." (*In Ecclesiasten* V 297,3). The path is from the κοινὸς ἄνθρωπος to the καινὸς οὗτος ἄνθρωπος,[45] that is from Adam as a token of Man, to *this* Jesus and to the singular event of his Incarnation as the image of the renewed plural of men.

4 From Substance to Economy: Echoes of a Polemic about *Acts* 2:36

There is one nature of God and one nature of man. There are three divine persons and innumerable human persons: is there a substance name for each one of them? Or how should we treat the difference between entities? Do several persons differ from one another like different entities do? Or substances only can be differentiated such a way? Again: do persons behave like substances? Faced with the complexity of the problems debated in that exceptionally theological century, the philosopher Aetius had found a very simple answer. From a small stream of philosophical tradition he extracted the principle whereby different things have different names and, conversely, different names mean different things (ὅτι ὧν τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστι διάφορα, τούτων παρηλλάχθαι καὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἀνάγκη). Eunomius, who referred to his teachings, had attempted to apply this principle to his ontology of divineness. It was for this reason that he maintained that Peter's utterance in *Acts* 2:36—"God has made both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified"—was a proof against the ὁμοούσιον of the Son and of the Father. Basil objected to him that the problem of names also applied to men. So, if we find ourselves, let's say, before, Peter, Paul and any number of men, we would have different names for each one, but only one substance in all of them (Πέτρου γὰρ καὶ Παύλου καὶ ἁπαξαπλῶς ἀνθρώπων προσηγορίαι μὲν διάφοροι, οὐσία δὲ πάντων μία.). He also added the *ratio* of his own semantics, which I will attempt to preserve in the following quotation, by wandering slightly off the standard translation:

> In a great many respects, we men are the same *towards* each other, and only in properties which are deemed individual are we different *from*

45 *Ref.* 112,3.

> each other. Hence, even appellatives do not signify the substances, but the individual properties, each of them marking everyone with a character. When, therefore, we hear 'Peter!' we do not direct our mind, by effect of the name, towards his substance (by 'substance' I do [not] in this case mean the material substrate), but we give form to the concept of the individual properties that are linked to him.[46]

I will leave aside my own thoughts on the philological aspects of this parenthetical clause (οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν [οὐ *om.* **A**] τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον), of which we have heard enough from D. L. Balás,[47] and I will go directly to the point: "What is the relationship between the question of the unity of nature and Peter's utterance?" At first sight, this utterance seems to play along with Eunomius. He is looking for a *principium individuationis* by using an ontology which is only made of substances. In this context, an event like the Incarnation forces us to specify (a) if a new individual—no matter how finely described—made his entrance into the set of actual beings, and (b) if such an entity has relations with other entities. According to Aetius' theory, Eunomius takes nouns as appellatives of substances; consequently, in order to prove the rightness of his account of reference for the Only-Begotten names, Eunomius quotes the statement of Peter in *Acts* 2:36; then, he states that the apostle Peter is talking about the Only-Begotten; whose hypostasis is eternal (ἡ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου διάνοια τὴν πρὸ αἰῶνος ὑπόστασιν τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ἡμῖν παρίστησι). How is it, then, that God "made" this hypostasis? And when was it made? Thus Eunomius argues—if we must believe to both Basil's and Gregory's account. For Eunomius, the point where language matches the world is the substance (the οὐσία referred to by names). His account is clearly what an analytic philosopher would call a "rigid" theory of reference. As for Basil, he does not respond by saying that the object referred to by Peter is different, but asserts that what is different is the actual way of giving the sentence a meaning. Peter's utterance does not regard the substance of God the Word, who in the beginning was with God; instead, it refers to the person who emptied himself in the form of a slave, with

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46 The pivotal statement for Basil's and Gregory's account of the unity of human nature is the following one: "διόπερ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐσμέν, τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώμασι μόνοις τοῖς περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις ἕτερος ἑτέρου διενηνόχαμεν. ὅθεν καὶ αἱ προσηγορίαι οὐχὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσι σημαντικαί, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιοτήτων, αἳ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν. ὅταν οὖν ἀκούσωμεν Πέτρον, οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ νοοῦμεν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος (οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν οὐ τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον), ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιωμάτων τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν θεωρουμένων τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐντυπούμεθα." (*CE* III 5 21,8–22,9).

47 Cfr. the article by D. L. Balás, "The Unity of Human Nature", and also the pages by J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 101–104 (both of them devoted to discuss the problematic passage at *CE* III 5 167,25–168,4).

everything that follows.[48] Where is the difference in ontological terms? How many hypostases are involved? How many substances? The problem does not only concern the conception of unity in God, but has consequences regarding the conception of the unity of human nature, from which Gregory drew inspiration.

The main question is: how many individuals are involved? To answer this would mean saying if we consider Peter's utterance to be plural or singular. The tacit rule is that an utterance about an individual is singular, and an utterance about more than one individual is plural. But we have seen that counting individuals as substances or as persons makes difference. Peter, Paul and Barnabas are called three, but they are only one nature. In second place: Which theoretical format should to possess a semantics, so that impute (or deny) the *sameness* to "the Word that was God" and "he who emptied himself in the form of a slave"? If words must conform to the *usus* of the theologian, so someone might think of Basil as himself theorizing the double person of the Son.[49] It seems to me it is wrong, for in Basil's answer there is an indication that leads one to discard this possibility. The apostle Peter, says Basil, is not theologizing; he is showing us the statements of *oeconomia*. After which, he starts to deal with certain aspects of Peter's sentence that, without his specification, may not have been so accentuated in the *CE III* of his brother Gregory. Basil concentrates first on the deictic item (τῇ δεικτικῇ φωνῇ) and, through this, on the possibility of an *extensional* interpretation of the sentence (πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁρώμενον πᾶσι προδήλως ἐπερειδόμενος). In order to sustain the possibility of a prevalently extensional interpretation he also makes use of another element: the receiver of Peter's utterance, ὑμεῖς, "you". This element is also a deictic one: it belongs less to the sentential plan than to the extra-sentential plan. Now, in this context, 'ὑμεῖς' does not only identify Peter's listeners, it also serves to identify the crucifiers of 'τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν'. Indeed, Peter says "ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε". The overlap re-identifies the collective actant, casting *the person of the sentence* (you, the crucifiers) onto *the person of the enunciation* (you, my—i.e. Peter's—listeners): such overhearers *extensionally* do overlap Jesus' crucifiers.

Several times Gregory cites Peter's utterance of *Acts* 2:36: we counted at least eight full occurences from the third book of the *CE*. In each quotation he stresses a new aspect of his reading the Incarnation. At every occurence there is

48 Οὐδὲ γὰρ περὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου, τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντος πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ κενώσαντος ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῇ τοῦ δούλου μορφῇ, καὶ γενομένου συμμόρφου τῷ σώματι τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, καὶ σταυρωθέντος ἐξ ἀσθενείας, σαφῶς διαλέγεται.

49 Among others, see for this opinion C. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa—Teologia trinitaria*, Milano 1994, 51 of the "Introduzione".

a repetition of the initial question: what is the utterance focusing on? Gregory turns Eunomius' interpretation upside down: Peter is not talking about two different entities or substances, but about two events that occur in the same πρόσωπον: δύο γὰρ πράγματα περὶ ἓν πρόσωπον ὁ τῆς γραφῆς λόγος γεγενῆσθαί φησι. One is an event of suffering (πάθος) and is caused by the Judaeans, the other is an event of conferment of dignity (τιμή) and is carried out by God, and it is not as if one were suffering and the other who receives the dignity of being elevated: (παρὰ μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων τὸ πάθος, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν τιμήν, οὐχ ὡς ἄλλου μὲν πεπονθότος, ἑτέρου 3.3.43 δὲ διὰ τῆς ἀνυψώσεως τετιμημένου. (*CE III* 3,42,7–43,1) The sentence Eunomius considered plural (indeed dual) reveals to be a pair of action sentences, held together by the πρόσωπον in which both actions take place.

"God has made him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified", so Peter said. "Κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε". Eunomius was interested in the grammar of "ἐποίησεν"; probably he took such a verb as a two place predicate, as being "*A* ἐποίησεν *B*". The sentence had to sound very similar to the beginning of a genealogy or a theogony. On the basis of his extant works, it is reasonable to believe that Eunomius committed to an ontology of just substances and operations among them. The basic elements of his ontology of the divinity were—so he thought—independent from the human plan of language and words: "When we say 'Unbegotten', then, we do not imagine that we ought to honour God only in name, in conformity with human invention; rather, in conformity with reality, we ought to repay him the debt which above all others is most due God: the acknowledgement that he is what he is".[50] As Gregory pointed out, Eunomius did not understand sentences like the following one: "πάντα ὢν οὗτος ὅσα ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος πλὴν τοῦ ἐκεῖνος εἶναι" (*CE* III 1,86), where just a difference of number is involved among persons. By dealing with nothing but substances, in another passage, he did misunderstand the relationship between the first man, Adam, and his son Abel, also considering the birth of a man as a process of parallaxis. In vain Gregory objected to him that "οὐκ οὐσία τις καινὴ καὶ παρηλλαγμένη παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίαν ἐν τῷ υἱῷ ὑπέστη, ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς φύσεως, τοῦτο καὶ ὁ ἐξ ἐκείνου ἐστίν, οὐ μεταβληθείσης εἰς ἑτερότητα ἐν τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ ὑποστάσει τῆς φύσεως" (*CE* III 1,85). I am almost sure that Eunomius had not read the lines by Plutarch's *De audiendis poetis*, where the philosopher of Chaeronea wonders about the semantics of the names of gods, stressing the difficulty to distinguish what a single uttered name does refer to, whether a *dynamis* or a *prosopon*; see *De aud. poet.* 22d, 2–9). Three problems were concerned

50 Eun. *Apol.* 8 (Vaggione 42–43).

in Plutarch's analysis: *i.e.* the pragmatical aspects of usage, the distinction of sense and reference, finally the intended meaning assigned by the author. Let me quote the following passage from the work: (*De aud. poet.* 23 a, 4):

> Let us then observe closely this distinction and discrimination of words (τὴν διαίρεσιν καὶ διάκρισιν τῶν ὀνομάτων) in greater and more serious matters, and let us begin with the gods, in teaching the young that when the poets employ the names of the gods, sometimes they apprehend in their conceptions the gods themselves (ποτὲ μὲν αὐτῶν ἐκείνων ἐφαπτόμενοι τῇ ἐννοίᾳ), and at other times they give the same appellations to certain faculties of which the gods are the givers and authors (ποτὲ δὲ δυνάμεις τινὰς ὧν οἱ θεοὶ δοτῆρές εἰσι καὶ καθηγεμόνες ὁμωνύμως προσαγορεύοντες).[51]

Had Eunomius rather read Plutarch than Aetius, he would have not committed those referential fallacies that have brought him to take all names as substantives and all substantives as names for substances; with what followed such a mistake.

There is one more passage to complete the present analysis of the Apostle's text of *Acts* 2:36: Basil and Gregory together carry on propping up Eunomius' coarse argumentation. Let us sum up. After having put the Eunomian dilemma behind them (either there are two substances or the Only-Begotten Son is not co-eternal with the Father), the Cappadocians return to the question: who is the utterance talking about? The focus now shifts to one of the two descriptions, the "Κύριος". Basil had indicated the grammar, underlining that '"τὸ Κύριος" οὐκ οὐσίας ἐστὶν, ἀλλ' ἐξουσίας ὄνομα'. This means that, if no new individual was introduced by the words of the Apostle (οὐ τὴν εἰς τὸ εἶναι πάροδον αὐτοῦ διηγεῖται), there is only one remnant interpretation: the utterances are not talking about different substances, nor do they divide the reference of the expressions they contain. There is not even the 'ποίημα' with which Eunomius had tried to deconstruct the paternity of God. Gregory reconstructs the aporetic landfall of his adversary. Eunomius failed, because he did not recognize the semantic difference between σχέσις and ἐναντίωσις, which corresponds to that between relational terms and absolute terms. In other words we could say that the σχέσις distinguishes without dividing the reference, whilst the ἐναντίωσις divides the reference, because it places the functives in the same semantic field. For example, the Father (ὁ πατήρ) has to do with the Son (ὁ υἱός) in a relation (σχέσις): now, for such a relation to apply, it is not requested

51 I quote in this case the translation by Frank Cole Babbitt enclosed in *Plutarch's Moralia, I, 1A–86A,* Cambridge (MA) 1927, 119, 121.

that the functives be overridden by a common predicate: the relation between the persons, specially in this case, is prior to any form of conceptual reduction. Eunomius, however—unable as he was to differentiate substantives from relative names—managed to separate the Father and the Son as if treating their reciprocal difference as a case of counterposition (ἐναντίωσις). Gregory was wondered in amazement: πῶς παρηλλάχθαι λέγει [*sc.* Eunomius] τὰς οὐσίας ἀλλήλων ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρός τε καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ. (*CE III*, 2.142, 6) Things worked not this way as for the opposition "ἀγέννητος *vs* γεννητός", for this constitutes a ἐναντίωσις. Indeed, in the latter case, the functives are not only correlated, they are also opposite relative to a semantic axis overriding them (the axis of γεννᾶν). But where does this distinction come from between names introducing a referent and names that do it not? Accordingly, one might wonder: What place do the latter have in the *oeconomia* of Basil and Gregory—that continues to look more and more like a philosophy of language in the noble sense, i.e. in a philosophy where language is primarily the *Logos* made flesh?

Basil and Gregory asserted against Eunomius that the use of the proper name does not require a reference to substance; I believe that it is a sign of the abandonment by the Cappadocians of semantics *à la* Aristotle. Naturally, the proper name *can* activate a reference, but it is not necessary that it concerns substance. Let us once again take the name 'Peter'. Basil says (*Adv. Eun.*, 577c–580b) that everytime he is caused to hear this proper name, it brings to mind a set of definite descriptions of the type "the son of Jonah", "the fisherman called to the apostolate", "the brother of Andrew" and so on. Each of these descriptions identifies Peter, *but does not fix his individual substance*, i.e. the substrate. Rather, it is true that such definite descriptions recall certain relational features that are around him (περὶ αὐτόν is the expression used in these cases). The same happens if one hears the proper name 'Paul' uttered: also in this case definite descriptions are recalled—such as "the man from Tarsus", "the disciple of Gamaliel", "the Apostle of the Nations", and so on. Also in this case one or more descriptions are sufficient to identify *who* is being talked about, without fixing the individual substance. The proof that this argument is correct is given by Basil himself: if it were true that by changing the name the substance too changed, then we would have to have more substances than people. There we have an explanation of Aetius' and Eunomius' mistake in somewhat technical terms.

Basil and Gregory—each in their anti-Eunomian works—developed this argument in even more detail, but I cannot follow their debate in a more detailed way. Rather, I shall come back to the utterance of *Acts* 2:36. "Κύριον καὶ Χριστὸν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίησε, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε". Here we have found: a proper name, a few descriptive indexical expressions, the

predicate "ἐποίησε", the predicate "ἐσταυρώσατε", the descriptions "Κύριον καὶ Χριστόν" and the descriptive singular term "ὁ Θεός". There are two sentences both describing events having something in common. Now, how do we identify what such events have in common? Gregory answers: this is due to the fact that there are indexical expressions like "τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν" and "ὑμεῖς" in each sentence. I add that it is these two expressions that keep the interpretation on an *extensional*—still better, a *historical*—plane and that save us from having to turn to the categories of substance, gender and species. The only things we need are the indexicals. When we hear "you" or "this Jesus", we need only look into the environment for something the speaker could wish to refer to in the given context. We do not look for what the name, or the description, refers to, but for what could satisfy it on the basis of what we believe to be the speaker's intention. In this task the speaker himself may not have a very clear idea about what he is referring to by using the name—however, by principle, this is not an obstacle to our search for a fitting interpretation to the context. The philosopher Keith Donnellan—who dealt with semantics of names in connection with the use of identifying descriptions—wrote on this subject that we must distinguish the two questions we could ask ourselves when someone describes something. One is: "*What do these descriptions denote* uniquely (*or best*)*?*".[52] Certainly, this is the question Eunomius asks himself, when reading Peter's words; and it is precisely because he reads the question in this way that he starts to look for a substance corresponding to every substantive that he comes across. The other question that we could ask ourselves—the one to which Donnellan awards the palm of semantic-pragmatic victory—is this: "*Why should he describe the referent in that way?*". This is getting close to the outlook defined by Basil and Gregory, according to which Peter's description does not work as a theological identification of the divine substance, but constitutes a discursive mode called *oeconomia*. According to Donnellan, the expression "describe in this way" does not refer to different identification criteria; if it were so we would find ourselves before a downright sophism. Donnellan, however, believes that it is a question of identifying those predicates that the speaker ascribes to the referent in that given context, for reasons not necessarily known to us. Peter talks about someone who was made Lord and Christ: let us ask "What is his intention in using these words?" According again to Donnellan, one thing is asking "What is the referent?" (so that fall, a few later, into uneliminable theological apories) and another thing is asking "What would the speaker be attributing that predicate to on this occasion?" If we choose, as Basil and Gregory do, this second formulation, the answer is not difficult. Indeed, we are able to connect

52 K. Donnellan, "Proper Names", 254–358.

Peter's linguistic act with certain circumstantial features that we draw from the present deictics. The question that Peter's listeners will have asked themselves is thus: To what would we be prepared to attribute the predicates that the speaker Peter is now using in his talk?

And here is my argument: the utterance in *Acts* 2:36 does not refer to a substance, does not revolve around the nature of God, it is not one, does not introduce new referents nor does it complicate the ontology of the Godhead or of Mankind by the intruding new kinds of entities. This happens, *because the use of indexical expressions does not make it necessary to identify the referent on the basis of its structural, i.e. theological, properties*. On the contrary, the two sentences are dealing with a referent that has been identified *via* ostension. Their indexes-based semantics is therefore extensional. To use a well-known formula by Saul Kripke, the reference of both the noun 'this Jesus' and the definite description 'the Christ' depends here on a causal history. Peter's words concern the attribution of predicates to the proper name borne by a person who is *ostensively* distinct from others and ostensively known through the historical chain of "baptism-acts" the Apostle is talking about in his Pentecostal talk. Strictly speaking there is no mention of things or individuals, but of linguistic entities such as the honorific title "Lord and Christ" and the name "this Jesus" whose bearer is an object that was ostended on a Roman cross in the presence of the object indicated by the speaker as "you". The sense is that "*A was made Such-and-Such by B*" (where *A* is indexically known to the listeners). Two predicates converge on one indexed object and what the two sentences tell is the succession in which the pejorative predicate ('"you" have crucified x') and the honorific predicate ('ζ has made Lord and Christ ξ')[53] were assigned to someone, also naming to whom and by whom they were assigned (the Judaeans in the first case, God in the second). Peter announces that he *who* you now call "the Crucified" is the one *who* from now on you can call "the Lord and the Christ".

There is perhaps room for a last observation. I do not think it is hazardous to introduce here a label that Gregory does not say, but which we can clearly think. Gregory says that there are two events, but he does everything to link them temporally and causally. To the point that one could say that the two descriptions—the Cross and Kingdom—are actually two descriptions of the same event. This is the singular event that shows us in its most essential form the term of human nature. It was first imprisoned in the condition in which Adam's sin put it; then, it was relieved to a superior condition under the guide

53 I use here the pair of Greek letters as placeholders, to mark where each singular term must be inserted in order to form a true or false sentence.

of the Cross and the crucified Jesus Christ. This is not theology but *oeconomia*. It is a prodigious revelation and a mighty confutation of the cosmic pessimism into which Qoheleth had enclosed the human ὅρος. In Gregory's words:

> Nothing causes amazement at something unexpected, when it functions within its own nature, but when things go beyond the limits of their nature, more than any they become objects of amazement; to them all attention turns, and every mind strains in wonder at the unexpected. That is why all the heralds of the word point to the wonder of the mystery in this, that God was manifested in the flesh, that the Word was made flesh, that the Light shone in the darkness that Life tasted death; all such things the heralds proclaim, and by them the wonder abounds at him who revealed his superlative power by what went beyond his own nature.[54]

Since the Incarnation, the Mankind is no more one nature in Adam than one person in Christ.

5 Conclusory Remarks

Is there something, in Nyssen's anthropology, that is human life, but not human nature? It was this question that initiated this research, whose object is only the *CE III*. My present conviction is that the hiatus between univocal and plurivocal utterances corresponds to the ontological difference we modern men place between 'human nature' and 'human condition'. Naturally, the expression 'human condition' is borrowed here only with the purpose of highlighting the problems raised by the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten within the semantics of φύσις and of suggesting that they are not resolvable in merely ontological terms of natural kinds and atoms or individual substrata.

When I say that Gregory *may* have used some of these locutions to speak about what we today would call the "human condition", I in no way imply that he had in mind a conceptually clear notion of this or any equivalent. I am only

54 οὐδὲν κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν κινούμενον ὡς ἐπὶ παρα δόξῳ θαυμάζεται, ἀλλ᾽ ὅσα τοὺς ὅρους ἐκβαίνει τῆς φύσεως, ταῦτα μάλιστα πάντων ἐν θαύματι γίνεται καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα πᾶσα μὲν ἐπιστρέφεται ἀκοή, πᾶσα δὲ διάνοια τείνε 3.3.35 ται τὸ παράδοξον θαυμάζουσα. διὸ καὶ πάντες οἱ τὸν λόγον κηρύσσοντες ἐν τούτῳ τὸ θαῦμα τοῦ μυστηρίου καταμηνύουσιν ὅτι θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ὅτι ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, ὅτι τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἔλαμψεν, ὅτι ἡ ζωὴ θανάτου ἐγεύσατο, καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα βοῶσιν οἱ κήρυκες, δι᾽ ὧν πλεονάζεται τὸ θαῦμα τοῦ διὰ τῶν ἔξω τῆς φύσεως 3.3.36 τὸ περιὸν τῆς δυνάμεως ἑαυτοῦ φανερώσαντος. (*CE* III 3 34,12–36,1). I quote here W. Moore, H. A. Wilson, H. C. Ogle, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II, 5, Buffalo (NY) 1893.

saying that Gregory *could have* meant his words in this fuzzy sense, because, at the time when he wrote, the semantics of such words had not been established by binding dogmatic decisions for the then current Greek language. What is more, it is practically obvious that in the *CE III* there must be something more than mere human nature, on the basis that the theme under discussion is the highly singular event of the ἐνανθρώπησις, that regards the nature and condition of Christ Jesus: who οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· (*Phil* 2.6–7). The very arguments used by Gregory—and by Basil before him—in order to debate the Incarnation with Eunomius shed light upon a kinship with present-day philosophical themes of apparent modernity such as: the inscrutability of semantic reference, the theory of definite descriptions, the theme of the logical form of utterances and of the ontology implied therein. Not to speak of the theme of the plural, whose logico-sematic implications seem to intertwine with the difference between nature and human condition.

In my examination of the *CE III* I adopted a partially different perspective from Zachhuber's one. Instead of dealing with the meaning of isolated terms, I preferred to apply the *Kontextprinzip* that cautions "never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition" or a sentence.[55] On close inspection, this is the same method used by Gregory in the heated argumentation of the third book *Against Eunomius*. He almost exclusively takes scriptural sentences and analyses their content in order to assign them a logical form.[56] A clear example is the analysis of *Acts* 2:36 in the context of book III. As already said, Gregory's reflection on human nature takes inspiration from—and remains bound to—the analysis of utterances from Scripture. This led certain scholars to think that *CE III* is a non-unitary book or that it is a collection of literary and exegetic analyses. Against these hypotheses, we believe that we can show *CE III* to be a unitary book. The unity is not to be found on the plane of content but on that of the method that Gregory used. In this case, Gregory proposes the reiterated analysis of a given utterance,

55 This principle—as known—was stated by the logician Gottlob Frege in his masterpiece *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, 1884 (Quoted from the English edition, G. Frege, *The Foundation of Arithmetic. A logico-mathematical enquiry into the concept of number*, transl. by J. L. Austin, New York 1950). Since Frege's times the principle of context is considered among the pivotal *caveat* of modern philosophy of language. I suspect that something similar to this rule could be found in much theoretical writings by the Cappadocian fathers. On this topic I wrote in La Matina, "God is not the Name of God . . .".

56 My thesis is that this way could be seen as a very method, that is constantly used by the Nyssen. It resembles somehow the analytic discoursive style. Let me quote finally M. La Matina, "Trinitarian Semantics", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero, *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden 2010, 743–748.

contained in *Acts* 2:36. This semantic analysis runs throughout the whole book, providing, each time, progressively deeper aspects of its logical construction. It is extraordinary that, in the entire book, this one utterance is given so much space. It could be treated as a real *Leitmotiv* of the work. Starting from this given we formed the opinion that the *CE III* is unitary and is a book of high philosophical content. The same notion of *oeconomia* is clearly established by Gregory as a semantic notion concerning the reference of both names and predicates in a contextualistic perspective.

I would however like to avoid that the reader thinks that I consider philosophy of language as a key that can open the doors to patristic texts with a power that is impossible for other approaches. This is not my idea of philosophy. On the contrary, ever since I started studying the Cappadocians, every day it became clearer to me how their philosophy is the right framework for approaching many of the problems that are currently discussed in the analytic community. To draw the patristic language of late Antiquity into the circle of analytic philosophers would help to retrace an appropriate and non-sterile attitude thereby to allow the semantics and ontology of both then and now to emerge, without introducing those antimetaphysical prejudices and that deflationist minimalism which have on occasions judged as unessential the analytic movement's contribution to theology and Patristics.[57]

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57 On this topic I defer the reader to my paper: M. La Matina, "I compiti di una filosofia del linguaggio orientata in senso cristiano", in: M. Pérez de Laborda – G. Maspero (eds.), *Fede e Ragione: l'incontro e il cammino*, Siena 2011, 159–185. The article is an attempt to map out the most relevant tasks of my analytic approach to the Fathers. For a theoretical evaluation of the most relevant approaches to the Greek fathers, let me quote the contribution by M. Cassin, "Text and Context: The Importance of Scholarly Reading. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*", in S. Douglass and M. Ludlow (eds), *Reading the Church Fathers*, London 2011, pp. 109–131 and 161–165.

Who Wrote Basil's *Epistula 38*?

A Possible Answer through Quantitative Analysis

Giulio Maspero, Mirko Degli Espositi, Dario Benedetto

1 Introduction: The Problem

At the 11th Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa, organized in Tübingen by Volker Drecoll[1] in 2008, a session was devoted to the authorship of *Epistula 38*, a work transmitted in Basil's epistolary corpus.[2] However this work has also been attributed to Gregory of Nyssa as a dogmatic treatise addressed to his brother Peter. The history of the discussion concerning the authorship of *Ep. 38* is marked by three main moments: in 1972 R. Hübner, studying the philosophical contents of the work, attributed it to Gregory;[3] even though this conclusion was sometimes discussed,[4] only in 1996 did V. Drecoll move *Ep. 38* back to Basil's corpus;[5] more recently, J. Zachhuber again defended the authorship of Gregory[6] based on lexicographical analysis. As is evident, the letter has been extensively analyzed and studied from philological, philosophical and theological perspectives. The aim of the present paper is to investigate its authorship by utilizing statistical methods and numerical computations.

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1 Cf. V. H. Drecoll—M. Berghaus, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008)*, SVigChr 106, Leiden 2011.

2 P. J. Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana Universalis I*, Brepols, Turnhout 1993, 620–623.

3 Cf. R. Hübner, "Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser der sog. Ep. 38 des Basilius. Zum unterschiedlichen Verständnis der ousia bei den kappadozischen Brüdern", in: J. Fontaine—Ch. Kannengiesser (eds.), *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, Paris 1972, 463–490.

4 Cf. P. J. Fedwick, "A Commentary of Gregory of Nyssa or the 38th letter of Basil of Caesarea", *OrChrP* 44 (1978) 31–51; J. Hammerstaedt, "Zur Echtheit von Basiliusbrief 38", in: E. Dassmann—K. Thraede (eds.), *Tesserae. Festschrift für Josef Engemann*, Jahrbuch für Antikes Christentum. Ergänzungsband 18, Münster 1991, 416–419; W.-D. Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea. Briefe. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert. Erster Teil*, BGrL 32, Stuttgart 1990.

5 Cf. V. H. Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea. Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner*, FGKD 66, Göttingen 1996.

6 Cf. J. Zachhuber, "Nochmals.Der „38. Brief" des Basilius von Cäsarea als Werk des Gregor von Nyssa", *ZAC* 7 (2003) 73–90.

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A caveat is required: this kind of research should not be viewed as an occult methodology that transcends philology or theology. Experience demonstrates that only the combination of both knowledge of the texts and expertise in the computational methods can offer trustworthy answers.

In some respects *Ep. 38* is a perfect "authorship attribution problem", because it is already known that the work either belongs to Basil or Gregory. Moreover, the sum of the lengths of the literary works of these authors is conspicuous, so that the application of statistical analysis may yield satisfactory results. But there is another element that seems favorable: both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa have produced extensive works to counter Eunomius, discussing the same subjects and referencing the same citations. It seems reasonable to suppose that these works serve as effective benchmarks to analyze *Ep. 38*. In fact, if we apply statistical methods and develop a kind of "distance" between different texts, the differences between *Ep. 38* and Basil's or Gregory's works to confute Eunomius should be due primarily to their personal styles, because the contents are homogeneous. It should also be noted that *Ep. 38* possesses dogmatic and Trinitarian content, similar to the works against Eunomius.

2 Corpus

Before analyzing *Ep. 38*, this method should be verified by testing it against the works with undisputed attribution to the aforementioned authors. Thus, the Corpus used in the present study is composed of all the works of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa currently available in electronic version. The digitalized texts in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) have been used.[7]

All the works, including the spurious and unconfirmed ones, have been used. The letters by Gregory[8] and Basil[9] have been individually analyzed. The latter were divided into three groups, according to their lengths: the first (see appendix for the list) includes letters larger than 2,500 characters (L); letters with extensions between 2,500 and 1,250 form the second group (C); and letters less than 1,250 constitute the third (M). Only letters written by Basil (and not to

7 See http://www.tlg.uci.edu/. The digital library has been developed by the University of California, Irvine.

8 G. Pasquali's edition has been used: *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (= GNO), VIII 2, Leiden 1959.

9 Y. Courtonne's edition has been used: *Saint Basile, Correspondance*, CUFr, Paris 1957–1961.

Basil) with undisputed authorship were used.[10] Thus, we have 85 in group L, 92 in C and 134 in the final group M.

Concerning Gregory's letters, we can only use 26 from the Pasquali collection, because letters 26 and 30 are not by Gregory. In this group, 16 letters exceed 2,500 characters, 7 are between 2,500 and 1,250 and only 3 are less than 1,250. We do not divide them into different categories, as in Basil's case, due to their small number.

Moreover, it is known that 27 and 28 were also transmitted in Basil's Corpus, at least in a shorter form (27 as 348 and 28 as 342). This means that they are in the same situation as *Ep. 38*.[11] There are three more letters, listed by A. Silvas in her study on Gregory's letters as numbers 33, 36 and 37, which also find themselves in a similar situation. Letters 36 and 37 respectively correspond to letters 124 and 365 in Basil's corpus.

There are two more letters in this position, but with the unique peculiarity that their attribution is known with certainty. In fact, letter 33 is also transmitted as Basil's letter 189, but coincides with one of his Trinitarian tracts, *Ad Eustathium, De Sancta Trinitate* (GNO III/1, 3–16). Because of this, Basil's letter 189 can be very useful in testing this method. The same can be said for letter 16 that is known to be part of the 8th chapter of *Contra Eunomium* III (GNO II, 226–228). In our analysis the results of attributing these two letters can serve as a test for the methods we implement.

3 Methods

There is a growing interest to analyze texts using mathematical methods to establish authorship.[12] As mathematicians and physicists began to develop interest in symbolic sequences, they naturally started to use their ideas to study these sequences generated by biological and human phenomena, literary texts in particular.

10 We have followed J. Fedwick's authoritative study. See the list in the appendix in P. J. Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana*, I, 674–678.

11 Cf. A. M. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: the Letters*, SVigChr 83, Leiden, Boston 2007, 203–204.

12 About the problem of authorship attribution in general, see H. Love, *Attributing Authorship. An Introduction*, Cambridge 2002. The historical survey is especially interesting: ch. 2, 14–31. For the mathematical methods, see P. Juola, *Authorship Attribution*, Hanover (MA) 2008.

In this context, an initial assumption is paramount. A text should be viewed as a sequence of symbols chosen from an alphabet, while the author is viewed as the "source" of the message: the literary text.

Assuming that these are "merely" sequences of symbols means we will not consider the semantic content of the text nor its linguistic/syntactic/grammatical aspects: letters of the alphabet, punctuation marks and spaces are just abstract symbols, containing no hierarchy.

Moreover, regarding the two methods used in this paper, the word as a basic constituent of the text holds no more meaning than any other aggregate of symbols, while the fundamental unit is the *n-gram*. Some examples may clarify:

1. *monogram* (1-gram) is defined as one single symbol of the alphabet;
2. *bigram* (2-gram) is defined as a sequence of two symbols; for example "ες" but also "ς," and also "ἐ_" (i.e. "ἐ" followed by a blank space);
3. *trigram* (3-gram) is defined as a sequence of three symbols, for example "τες", but also "ὸ_ὅ"
4. *n-gram* is defined as any sequence of *n* symbols; for example "οὖς_τὸ_ὅ" is an 8-gram.

The two methods implemented here have been developed from those that have already been used in a project concerning the attribution of Antonio Gramsci's papers.[13] Here we can briefly sketch the main ideas. The interested reader is referred to other works for mathematical details and discussions.[14]

Each method defines a kind of *similarity distance* between texts: given any pair of texts, each method produces a positive number that we interpret as the differentiating distance between the texts. A small distance means that the two texts are quite similar (either in the argument/topic or in the author's style, see below), whereas a greater distance means a higher degree of dissimilarity.

The first method (that we call the *entropic-distance*: ED) relies on the fundamental ideas which are the basis of the so-called *zippers compression algorithms*, i.e. the mathematical algorithms that constitute the heart of the famous compression software daily used to compress texts and files, such as

13 C. Basile—D. Benedetto—E. Caglioti et al., "L'attribuzione dei testi gramsciani: metodi e modelli mathematici", *La matematica nella società e nella cultura* 3 (2010) 235–269.

14 C. Basile—D. Benedetto—E. Caglioti—M. Degli Esposti, "An example of mathematical authorship attribution", *Journal of Mathematical Physics* 49 (2008) 1–20; D. Benedetto—M. Degli Esposti—G. Maspero, "The Puzzle of Basil's Epistula 38: A Mathematical Approach to a Philological Problem", *Journal of Quantitative Linguistics* 20 (2013) 267–287.

winzip, *gzip* and so on. A suitable adaptation of these compression algorithms allows for the automatic detection of a mutual recurrence of patterns in the two texts, i.e. it detects *n-grams* (for several different *n*'s) that occur in both texts. Roughly speaking, we *compress* the second texts by only using the *information* yielding from the first. The higher the compression rate we are able to achieve, the greater the similarity between the two texts (see the references quoted in nn. 13 and 14 for more details). With an analogy, we could compare the mechanism of this compression algorithm to the difficulty in translating a new author when one is used to translating another: the more there is a difference found in the language, content, terminology and style of the new author with respect to the previous, the more difficult the translation process is.

The second method (that we call the *n-gram-distance*: NGD) works with a given fixed *n* value; for example with *n* = 8 for sequences like "οὗς_τὸ_ὅ". For each text, the frequency, i.e. the number of occurrences, of any given possible *n-gram* is easily and quickly computed. We then define the distance between any two given texts comparing the corresponding list of frequencies for a fixed *n* value (again, see the references quoted in nn. 13 and 14 for more details). The more the fraction of *n-grams* there are in common, the greater the similarity these texts will yield. Working with small *n* values (i.e. a couple of characters or an *n* value less than 5), we discover that the similarities are found at the 'subword' level. For *n* values between 5 and 6 the explored features are connected to the words of the texts, because the average length of a word is between these values. And for *n* values greater than 6 the correlations between different words are investigated.

The choice of the *n* parameter that defines the length of the *n-grams* used is crucial and it is empirically fixed using a training corpus of previously attributed texts. In the case we are discussing here, the optimal choice turns out to be *n* = 12, that can be connected with correlations at the "couple-of-words" level.[15]

The attribution procedure consists of comparing each text with corpora of texts possessing known attribution, that the corpora contains all stylistic features needed to efficiently discriminate between the two authors.

15 We note that *n* values close to *n* = 12 render very similar results. This reflects a very important characteristic of our method, namely its *stability*. On the opposite extreme, very small *n* values provide quite confusing data, while larger *n* values correspond to sequences of words that are too long and rarely repeat throughout the corpus, seriously degrading the efficiency of the *n-gram-distance.*

In order to extract useful and coherent information from these comparisons, it is crucial that the lengths (in characters) of the texts of the known corpora are all almost the same: longer texts are usually richer and contain several different expressions, producing an artificial effect of *attracting* the unknown texts more, leading to smaller similarity distances.

In the case we discuss here the total length of the works written by Gregory of Nyssa to counter Eunomius (GCE) is about 6 times larger than those written by Basil of Caesarea (BCE). Therefore, in order to construct the reference corpora we split the two sets into sections of the same length. Attribution is performed essentially by looking at those which are closer to the text to attribute. The exact mathematical procedure is a complex algorithm that produces a so-called *ranking index* of the two authors.

The length used in the splitting of the texts (*length of the section*) has been selected through empirical experiments on a training corpus.

This "tuning" procedure leads us to the following two choices:

a) Sections of about 170,000 characters long: BCE is left untouched, whereas GCE is divided into 6 equal parts.
b) Sections of about 11,000 characters long: BCE is decomposed into 16 parts of equal length and GCE into 94 parts.

The motivation behind using two very different *scales of comparison* is as follows: confronting any unknown text with sections that are 170,000 characters long enhances the weight of rare stylistic features, whereas using sections of 11,000 characters stresses the importance of frequently used stylistic patterns.

In order to correlate the diverse information arising from the two different scale analyses, both ED and NGD have been implemented with these scales, rendering results of four different attributions for each disputed text: ED at 170,000 (method I), NGC at 170,000 (method II), ED at 11,000 (method III), and NGC at 11,000 (method IV).

The different texts have been preprocessed, stripping them of all accents, smooth and rough breathings, and diacritics. Moreover, all capital letters have been transformed into small ones.[16] Only punctuation marks have been left.

16 This is a crucial point that partially flawed the results presented at the end of the Colloquium in Leuven: during our research we discovered that the electronic edition of GCE, taken from GNO, does not use capital letters when a paragraph starts with the reference number. We eliminated all numbers, but the lack of capital letters introduced a bias sufficiently significant to alter results. See n. 26 *infra*.

4 Some Examples

If we directly apply ED and NGD (without sections in this case) to some known texts, we achieve meaningful results. For example, we compute the following distances from Sophocles' *Antigone* (the first number is ED and the second is NGD with $n = 8$):

Oedipus coloneus (Sophocles)	0.791 / 0.922
Alcestis (Euripides)	0.818 / 0.930
Ad Ablabium (Gregory of Nyssa)	0.995 / 0.968

These three cases show that the distances between two tragedies of the same author is less than the distance between two tragedies written by different authors, and that the distance between a tragedy and a theological work, like the *Ad Ablabium*, is much greater.

Computing the distance between *In sextum Psalmum* (Gregory of Nyssa) and some other kinds of works yields the following results:

with NGD and n = 8	
Ad Ablabium (Gregory of Nyssa)	0.936
Ad Eustathium (Gregory of Nyssa)	0.939
De beneficientia (Gregory of Nyssa)	0.950
Oratio Theologica 29 (Gregory of Nazianzus)	0.955
Antigone (Sophocles)	0.984
Alcestis (Euripides)	0.986
Oedipus coloneus (Sophocles)	0.987

with ED	
De beneficientia (Gregory of Nyssa)	0.897
Oratio Theologica 29 (Gregory of Nazianzus)	0.922
Ad Ablabium (Gregory of Nyssa)	0.950
Ad Eustathius (Gregory of Nyssa)	0.963
Antigone (Sophocles)	0.975
Oedipus coloneus (Sophocles)	0.983
Alcestis (Euripides)	1

We see that, with NGD, the distance between two theological works of the IV century is considerably less than that between a tragedy and the *In sextum Psalmum*. Similarly, we can verify that the distance between two works of

Gregory of Nyssa is less than the distance between a dogmatic work by the same author and another by Gregory of Nazianzus. But with ED it is evident that the distance between a dogmatic work and an exegetical work both written by Gregory of Nyssa can be greater than the distance between two works written by different authors: *Oratio Theologica 29* by Gregory of Nazianzus is, in fact, nearer to *In sextum Psalmum* than *Ad Ablabium* and *Ad Eustathius.* This makes authorship attribution difficult and is related to the capacity of ED to explore and compare the texts at different scales, being more sensitive to the differences in the contents of the works.

However, both distances can be useful, as demonstrated by the example wherein the New Testament text closest to the Acts of the Apostles is the Gospel of Luke. The distances computed with ED are as follows:

Acts—Gospel of Luke	=	0.70
Acts—Gospel of Matthew	=	0.74
Acts—Gospel of Mark	=	0.76
Acts—Gospel of John	=	0.79
Acts—Ep. Hebrews	=	0.81
Acts—Ep. Romans	=	0.82
Acts—Ep. Ephesians	=	0.89
Acts—Ep. John 3	=	0.93

The result is virtually identical with NGD and n = 8 and 12 (the two numbers):

Acts—Gospel of Luke	=	0.801 / 0.947
Acts—Gospel of Matthew	=	0.825 / 0.957
Acts—Gospel of Mark	=	0.840 / 0.961
Acts—Gospel of John	=	0.850 / 0.969
Acts—Ep. Romans	=	0.896 / 0.983
Acts—Ep. Hebrews	=	0.900 / 0.985
Acts—Ep. Ephesians	=	0.941 / 0.991
Acts—Ep. John 3	=	0.995 / 0.999

As can be seen, with NGD there is an inversion between Romans and Hebrews, because this kind of distance works in a different way with respect to ED, but again the nearest book to Acts is the Gospel of Luke.

The result is that the methods are sensitive to both style and vocabulary. Because of this sensitivity, comparing two texts written on differing subjects by a single author may yield results of a greater distance than two works with similar vocabularies written by two different authors.

5 Results

We have designed the analysis of *Ep. 38* in such a way as to minimize the sensitivity to different contents and vocabulary: we compare the different distances of the letter from the sum of the three *Contra Eunomium* written by Gregory (GCE) and the three books against Eumomius composed by the bishop of Caesarea (BCE), dividing them according to what was previously explained regarding the four methods utilized. The advantage is that all these texts possess similar contents, vocabularies and quotations. The single work is attributed to Gregory if it is nearer to GCE or to Basil if it is nearer to BCE.

All the methods attribute all the letters to Gregory, except for letter 5 (three methods in favor of Basil and only method II in favor of Gregory). One method also fails for letters 21 and 24 (respectively I for 21 and III for 24), but in these cases the other three methods yield the correct answer. The overall result is that 25 of 26 letters are correctly attributed (96%). The error with letter 5 can be explained by the fact that it is more an exposition of the faith written for a synod of bishops in Neocesarea or in Sebasteia in 380:[17] its style may be influenced by this circumstance. As will be seen later, Basil possesses a rich style that tends to attract attributions in the case of a text written by any author who is neither of the two Cappadocian brothers.

The percentage of correctly attributed letters is very similar for Basil's larger letters (L): only 4 of the 85 letters are incorrectly attributed (5%), 9 ties (10%), and 72 correct attributions[18] (85%). Regarding the ties, methods II and IV always attribute the letter to Gregory, while methods I and III attribute it to Basil (except 164, which is attributed to Gregory by I and II). The letters that cannot be attributed are: 58, 73, 98, 99, 141, 164, 190, 199 and 225. Those incorrectly attributed are: 2 (only I for Basil), 14 (all methods favor Gregory), 138 (only III favors Basil), and 237 (again only III holds the correct answer).[19]

As expected, the results worsen by decreasing the size of the sample. In fact, for the second group of 92 letters (C), with more than 1,250 and less than 2,500 characters, we have 10 errors (11%) and 23 ties (25%). The number of correct attributions is only 59 (64%). The outcome is even worse for the last group of 134 letters containing less than 1,250 characters (M): 25% errors, 25% ties and only 50% of correct attributions. This demonstrates the importance of

17 Pasquali writes: "potius quam epistula, expositio fidei est, idcirco composita ut eam in concilio recitaret" (GNO VIII/2 31). See A. M. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: the Letters*, 135–136.

18 In 17 cases we have 3 methods in favor of Basil and one against.

19 The first two letters are addressed to *a* Gregory: in case of letter 14 it is known to be Basil's brother. The other two letters are addressed to Eusebius of Samosata.

a healthy statistical sample in order for this kind of method to be effective. It could be said that the decreasing effectiveness is a solid indication of the meaningfulness of the results of the computation.

For the works of the two authors we yield similar percentages. In the case of Basil all 42 texts are correctly attributed except for *Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis* (27,087 characters), which is assigned to Gregory according to three methods, while III assigns it to Basil. Two more works cannot be attributed (again II and IV favor Gregory and I and III favor Basil): *Quod rebus mundanis adhaerendum non sit* (29,693) and *Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi* (22,501). In this way 39 of 42 works are attributed to Basil[20] (93%) with only one error (2%) and two ties (5%). It should be noted that the subject of all three works is moral: it seems consistent that the method finds it difficult to distinguish these kinds of works, because it is measuring the distance of the analyzed work from two sets of dogmatic works as those against Eunomius.

The case of Gregory is more complex and interesting from the philological perspective. Of the 60 works, 53 are correctly attributed[21] (88%), but 4 are given to Basil (7%) and 3 cannot be attributed (5%). The result is worse than in Basil's case. But from the philological perspective it is very interesting to see which works are not attributed to Gregory. The four incorrect attributions are: *Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio* (24,222 characters), *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem ii* (15,516), *Encomium in xl martyres ii* (19,152) and *De instituto Christiano* (55,983). All are attributed to Basil by the four methods, except *De instituto Christiano* that is correctly attributed by II.

Even though all these works are present in GNO, only the authorship of *Encomium in xl martyres ii* has never been questioned. In fact *Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio* and *De instituto Christiano* have always been discussed. About *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem ii*, J. Daniélou affirmed that its authorship was doubtful[22] and it has been transmitted by only two codices, which assign it to different authors.[23] The same doubts can be raised for one of the ties (*Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus*),[24] while the

20 Only one of these is attributed to Basil by three methods against one. For the other 38 works the answer is unanimous.

21 Of these, 8 are attributed with three methods against one.

22 Cfr. J. Daniélou, "Bulletin d'histoire des origines chrétiennes", *RevSR* 52 (1964), 101–169, 133.

23 Sinaiticus gr. 493 (8th/9th c.) and Vaticanus gr. 446 (12th c.). The title of the former assigns the work to John of Constantinople, while only the latter affirms that Gregory is the author. See GNO X 2,96–97.

24 Some part of this work is probably the result of a synod, like Basil's *Ep.* 5.

case of the other two (*Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt* and *De iis qui baptismum differunt*) seems similar to the two ties in Basil's analysis probably due to the moral content of the works. Only *Encomium in xl martyres ii* cannot be explained on the basis of previous philological analysis or the specificity of the methods utilized.

The analysis results of Gregory's works seem to suggest a strong philological meaningfulness in what the method finds. Moreover, its effectiveness appears sound. For example, if one does not consider *Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio, De instituto Christiano* and *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem ii* among Gregory's works, the error in percentage is 2%, the ties are 5%, and the correctly attributed works are 93%.

6 Commentary

It seems that the combination of the four methods is very effective for the works undoubtedly attributed to Basil and Gregory. The overall effectiveness is high: if the 126 writings by Basil are individually counted, 110 are correctly attributed (87%), with 5 errors (4%), and 11 ties (9%); of Gregory's 85 writings, 77 are correctly attributed (91%), with 5 errors (6%), and 3 ties (3%). If *Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio, De instituto Christiano* and *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem ii* are not considered, the results for Gregory become 77 correct attributions of 82 writings (94%), 2 errors (2%) and 3 ties (4%).

These results increase in accuracy, if one takes their sizes into account instead of the number of correctly attributed works. The results yielded for Gregory are 3,401,934 correctly attributed characters over a total size of 3,572,647 (95%), with 51,427 ties (2%) and 119,286 errors (3%). If *Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio, De instituto Christiano* and *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem ii* are not included in the corpus, the percentages are: 98% correct attributions, 1% errors, and 1% ties. The case of Basil's corpus is similar: taking into account only the 2,926,539 of the letters in the L group (larger than 2,500) 2,783,199 characters are correctly attributed (95%), with 95,025 (3%) ties and 48,314 (2%) errors. Our methods yield almost 95% accuracy for both authors.

The combination of the four methods seems useful. In fact, our results show that ED favors Basil, while NGD favors Gregory. This can be explained, because Basil has a more complete and rich style, while Gregory's linguistic style is more typical. The distances based on the *n-gram* with $n = 12$ identify very specific sequences. Combining the four methods seems to be a good

solution, because these tendencies compensate each other. In fact, with only one method or with the combination of two of them, the number of ties in greater. For example, dealing with Basil's works, we receive one error and 2 ties with the first pair of methods (I and II), no error and 4 ties with the second (III and IV) and 1 error and 2 ties with the four methods together. For letters in group L, we receive, 4 errors and 17 ties for the first pair (I and II), and 2 errors and 19 ties for the second (III and IV) vs. 4 errors and 9 ties with the four methods together. For Gregory the trend is the same: with his letters we get no error and 2 ties with the first pair (I and II), 1 error and 1 tie with the second (III and IV), and 1 error and no tie with all four methods; with the works we get 3 errors and 4 ties with the first pair (I and II), 4 errors and 11 ties with the second (III and IV), and 4 errors and 3 ties with the four methods together.

7 Ep. 38 and Other Letters

After this initial analysis, we may apply the four methods to those letters like *Ep. 38*, which were transmitted in Basil's corpus but are also attributed to his brother, causing doubtful attribution. First, we check Basil's *Ep. 16* and *189*, which can be used as benchmarks because it is known that Gregory wrote them and are respectively part of the 8th chapter of *Contra Eunomium* III (1,542 characters) and of *Ad Eustathius* (14,005). Both these letters are attributed to Gregory by the four methods. In this way we receive a confirmation of the accuracy of our results.

Then we can proceed to investigate the authorship of Basil's *Ep. 10* (884 characters), that is Gregory's *Ep. 21* in the Pasquali collection, which is attributed to the latter by all methods but I; Basil's *Ep. 342*, that is also Gregory's *Ep. 28* (607 characters), and *Ep. 348* (760 characters), that is Gregory's *Ep. 27*, are both attributed to Gregory. On the contrary *Ep. 124* (1,233 characters), that is listed by A. Silvas as Gregory's *Ep. 36*, and *Ep. 365* (2,095 characters), presented as Gregory's *Ep. 37*, cannot be attributed, as I and III attribute them to Basil, while II and IV assign the letters to Gregory. This reflects the opinions of the different philologists.[25] It must also be taken into account that all these letters, except *Ep. 16* and *189*, are very short.

25 See J.-R. Pouchet, "Une lettre spirituelle de Gregoire de Nysse identifiée: L'*Epistula* 124 du corpus basilien", *VigChr* 42 (1988) 28–46, and the contrary position of P. J. Fedwick in *Bibliotheca Basiliana*, I, 675, n. 34. A. M. Silvas is in favor of Gregory: *Gregory of Nyssa: the Letters*, 263–269.

This is not the case of *Ep. 38*, that is the object of the present study. It contains 18,083 characters. If, after all these computations, we apply the four methods, we receive unanimous attributions to Gregory.[26] The letter may also be analyzed section by section, to investigate the possibility of an internal structure. The result is that all the sections are clearly attributed to Gregory, except the last with 1,556 characters that cannot be attributed. This can be explained, because the ending of a work generally follows some common rhetorical patterns, that make the attribution impossible on the basis of stylistic features. This is a phenomenon present in other works. More detailed computations, that cannot be reproduced here, reveals that section 5 is the more Gregorian part of the letter. We can conclude that *Ep. 38* was written by Gregory with less than 5% probability of error.

This can be confirmed if we extend the analysis to the dubious and spurious works of both authors' corpora. For Basil, in fact, the result is that most of them are attributed to him. The Basilian attribution is excluded only for *Sermo 13, Prologus 5, Epitimia in canonicas* and *Epitimia*, while *Homilia in illud: Ne dederis somnum oculis tuis* cannot be attributed. The tendency towards a Basilian attribution may be due to the more general literary style of the bishop of Caesarea.

This is confirmed looking at Gregory's dubious and spurious works. Here only the fragment *Tractatus ad Xenodorum* is attributed to Gregory, while all other works are ties (7 works, *De occursu domini* and *In annuntiationem* among them) or nearer to Basil (12 works, *Testimonia adversus Judaeos*, *In luciferam sanctam domini resurrectionem* and *In sanctum Ephraim* among them). This tendency towards Basil seems to imply a greater accuracy in the attribution of *Ep. 38* to Gregory.

8 Conclusion

The presently devised methodology has succeeded in correctly attributing virtually 95% of the works and letters of sufficient length. The results have proven to be coherent with what was previously known in the philological and patristic literatures. The conclusion is that *Ep. 38* was very probably written by Gregory of Nyssa. This result seems even more trustworthy because *Ep. 38* possesses dogmatic content and the method was designed to be most effective for

26 The different results presented in Leuven were due to what has been said in n. 16 about capital letters: *Ep. 38* was not edited in GNO and Basil was favored in previous computations because of a "false" abundance of capital letters induced by the bias.

this kind of work. Looking at the overall analysis, we can say that the statistical probability of error in this attribution is less than 5%. This research is still in progress and other interesting findings will be published at a later date, part of which concerns the internal structure of some works.

Appendix

Gregory's letters (number of characters in parentheses):

1 (12380), 2 (7076), 3 (12213), 4 (4216), 5 (4414), 6 (2848), 7 (1302), 8 (1432), 9 (974), 10 (1625), 11 (2195), 12 (2035), 13 (3003), 14 (3137), 15 (1137), 16 (1746), 17 (10158), 18 (4399), 19 (8548), 20 (6240), 21 (836), 24 (6640), 25 (5833), 27 (2446), 28 (4434), 29 (3385).

Basil's large letters (L):

1 (2449), 2 (11532), 5 (3747), 6 (3414), 9 (3947), 14 (3197), 22 (7060), 25 (2805), 28 (6716), 32 (2597), 46 (13472), 51 (3132), 52 (5400), 58 (2438), 59 (3903), 66 (3699), 69 (4621), 70 (2630), 71 (3190), 73 (3433), 74 (5659), 84 (3193), 90 (3351), 92 (7099), 94 (3551), 98 (2841), 99 (6856), 112 (4246), 125 (6365), 128 (3292), 129 (3444), 130 (2837), 131 (2709), 135 (2976), 136 (2419), 138 (3391), 139 (3779), 140 (3812), 141 (2526), 150 (6155), 156 (3907), 159 (3160), 160 (6746), 161 (3037), 164 (3502), 188 (16904), 190 (4028), 198 (2547), 199 (14584), 203 (7714), 204 (12789), 207 (7034), 210 (11726), 212 (3115), 214 (5901), 217 (11823), 219 (2959), 222 (2802), 223 (13474), 224 (4825), 225 (2626), 226 (9386), 227 (3557), 233 (3381), 234 (3551), 235 (4662), 236 (11384), 237 (3109), 239 (3405), 240 (4177), 242 (3438), 243 (8175), 244 (14666), 251 (5635), 257 (2745), 258 (5828), 260 (13962), 261 (4940), 263 (7140), 265 (7559), 266 (4077), 269 (3405), 272 (3205), 289 (3157), 291 (2487).

Gregory's works:

Ad Eustathium de sancta trinitate (17306), *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus* (18801), *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei* (24994), *Ad Simplicium de fide* (9057), *Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio* (24222), *Adversus Macedonianos de spiritu sancto* (47354), *Ad Theophilum adversus Apollinaristas* (10394), *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium* (166134), *De mortuis non esse dolendum* (57291), *De beneficentia* (20441), *In illud: Quatenus uni ex his fecistis mihi fecistis* (23762), *Contra usurarios* (19069), *Contra fornicarios* (8571), *In diem luminum* (29240), *In sanctum pascha* (36776), *De tridui inter mortem et resurrectionem domini nostri Jesu Christi spatio* (37705), *In sanctum et salutare pascha* (3923), *In ascensionem Christi* (6102), *De deitate adversus Evagrium*

(13124), *Oratio funebris in Meletium episcopum* (15622), *Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam* (17473), *Oratio funebris in Flacillam imperatricem* (18734), *De instituto Christiano* (55983), *De professione Christiana ad Harmonium* (16082), *De perfectione Christiana ad Olympium monachum* (48087), *In inscriptiones Psalmorum* (221172), *In sextum Psalmum* (9828), *In Ecclesiasten* (188916), *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* (140975), *In Canticum canticorum* (492779), *Epistulae* (119388), *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem i* (24405), *Vita sanctae Macrinae* (56379), *De vita Mosis* (189582), *De virginitate* (127481), *De virginitate* (4025), *Oratio catechetica magna* (127459), *De oratione dominica orationes v* (99153), *In Basilium fratrem* (38980), *Oratio in diem natalem Christi* (31141), *Orationes viii de beatitudinibus* (140334), *Dialogus de anima et resurrectione* (144938), *Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt* (12610), *De iis qui baptismum differunt* (20017), *Epistula canonica ad Letoium* (19271), *Apologia in hexaemeron* (89333), *De opificio hominis* (170743), *In illud: Tunc et ipse filius* (31959), *Contra fatum* (42311), *De infantibus praemature abreptis* (40698), *De pythonissa ad Theodosium episcopum* (9356), *De deitate filii et spiritus sancti* (28251), *De spiritu sancto sive In pentecosten* (7737), *Encomium in sanctum Stephanum protomartyrem ii* (15516), *De sancto Theodoro* (16072), *Encomium in xl martyres ia* (9519), *Encomium in xl martyres ib* (20338), *Encomium in xl martyres ii* (19152), *De vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi* (86569).

Basil's works:

Epistulae (871401), *Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi* (22501), *Homilia in illud: Destruam horrea mea* (18870), *Homilia in divites* (27874), *Homiliae super Psalmos* (324499), *De jejunio I* (22023), *De jejunio II* (15310), *Homilia de gratiarum actione* (21326), *Homilia in martyrem Julittam* (27240), *Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis* (27087), *Quod deus non est auctor malorum* (28100), *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* (20995), *Homilia de invidia* (16966), *Homilia in principium proverbiorum* (41721), *Homilia exhortatoria ad sanctum baptisma* (24410), *In ebriosos* (21022), *De fide* (8749), *In illud: In principio erat verbum* (11857), *In Gordium martyrem* (19954), *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses* (18170), *De humilitate* (16531), *Quod rebus mundanis adhaerendum non sit* (29693), *In Mamantem martyrem* (11537), *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos* (20418), *Prologus* 7 (26394), *Prologus* 8 (17288), *Prologus* 4 (12460), *Asceticon magnum sive Quaestiones* (154237), *Prologus* 3 (1285), *Asceticon magnum sive Quaestiones* (239105), *Regulae morales* (182983), *De baptismo libri duo* (134552), *Homilia in Psalmum* 115 (13487), *Homilia dicta in Lacisis* (22527), *In sanctam Christi generationem* (19430), *Adversus eos qui per calumniam dicunt dici a nobis tres deos* (9439), *Liturgia* (32881), *Sermones de moribus a Symeone Metaphrasta collecti*

(321841), *Prologus* 6 (2861), *Canon* 96 (763), *Homiliae in hexaemeron* (224994), *De legendis gentilium libris* (29735), *De spiritu sancto* (163280).

Gregory's dubious works:

In luciferam sanctam domini resurrectionem (6871), *De creatione hominis sermo primus* (28654), *De creatione hominis sermo alter* (26180), *De paradiso* (10539), *De creatione hominis sermo primus* (35437), *De creatione hominis sermo alter* (29492), *De paradiso—recensio ΛF* (12063), *In annuntiationem* (10962), *Inventio imaginis in Camulianis* (5461), *Ad imaginem dei et ad similitudinem* (24443), *Testimonia adversus Judaeos* (40268), *Decem syllogismi contra Manichaeos* (1287), *Epistula xxvi ad Evagrium monachum* (6955), *Sermo in illud: Hic est filius meus dilectus* (1445), *Sermo in Mariam et Joseph* (666), *De occursu domini* (38060), *Tractatus ad Xenodorum* (612), *Sermo in sanctum Romanum* (379), *Liber de cognitione dei* (29641), *Epistula ad Philippum monachum* (257), *In sanctum Ephraim* (40330).

Basil's dubious works:

Enarratio in prophetam Isaiam (607873), *Expositio fidei Nicaenae* (2310), *Homilia in aquas* (5848), *Homilia de virginitate* (19810), *De spiritu* (5495), *In Barlaam martyrem* (6624), *Sermo 10* (6781), *Sermo 11* (24066), *Sermo 12* (4712), *Sermo 13* (13440), *Prologus 5* (8884), *In Psalmum 28* (10988), *Homilia in Psalmum 37* (24847), *Homilia in Psalmum 132* (2611), *Homilia de spiritu sancto* (10321), *Homilia de paenitentia* (15513), *Homilia in illud: Ne dederis somnum oculis tuis* (11499), *De jejunio* (3495), *Orationes sive Exorcismi* (8517), *Poenae in monachos delinquentes* (2214), *Epitimia in canonicas* (2064), *Epitimia* (5664), *Consolatoria ad aegrotum* (9017), *Homilia de misericordia et judicio* (8390), *Sermo ob sacerdotum instructionem* (2230), *Sermo de contubernalibus* (20268), *Oratio pro inimicis et amicis* (1603), *Constitutiones asceticae* (119060), *Sermo ob sacerdotum instructionem* (2480), *Sermo 14* (2059), *Sermo 15* (2492), *Sermo 16* (482).

Further Considerations on the Philosophical Background of *Contra Eunomium* III

Claudio Moreschini

In the present essay we propose some interpretations of a certain number of passages of *Contra Eunomium* III, whose philosophical characteristic have been neglected until now,[1] without reconsidering some tenets which we (and others) dwelt upon elsewhere. Indeed, book III is by no means poorer than books I and II of the philosophical support, which is typical of all Gregory's theology.[2]

1 About Gregory's Theology

1.1 *About the Generation of the Son*

III 1,65. For they are one (the Father and the Son), and the one is observed in the other, neither exceeding nor falling short (οὐχ ὑπερπῖπτον, οὐκ

* This article (particularly 1.4 and 1.5) has benefitted greatly from the suggestions by the anonymous peer reviewers on an earlier draft of this text. I am grateful for them.

1 Of course, we are not interested in short philosophical quotations which do not introduce any new Nyssenian doctrine, such as *CE* III 7,33–34, where Gregory quotes the famous Platonic definition of 'principle' and the impossibility of imagining another principle before it (cf. *Phaedrus* 245c), and others. Nor did we take into account an important doctrine, that of Christology (III 1,45; 3,45–46; 4,64 etc.), whose terminology depends on Aristotle and Stoic's doctrine of the mixture, due to its full treatment by J.-R. Bouchet, "Le vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse", *Revue Thomiste* 68 (1968) 533–582.

2 For instance, regarding the identification of God (or the Son) with ὁ ὤν of Exodus 3,14, and other philosophical and theological questions. On this subject cf. C. Moreschini, "Scrittura e filosofia: la validità della sapienza profana verificata sulla base del testo sacro", in: M. Cassin—H. Grelier (eds), *Grégoire de Nysse: la Bible dans la construction de son discours. Actes du colloque de Paris, 9–10 février 2007*, Études Augustiniennes, série Antiquité 184, Paris 2008, 3–19. See also J. Rist, "On the Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa", *Hermathena* 169 (2000) 129–151, here 140.

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> ἐλαττούμενον), and not changed or altered in any divine and good feature.[3]

"Neither exceeding nor falling short" means the deriving of a hypostasis from the superior one, produced by its superabundant *dynamis*; this doctrine can be found in Gregory of Nazianzus too, and goes back to Plotinus. Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of the generation of the Son, says (*orat.* 29,2):[4]

> For we shall not venture to speak of "an overflow of goodness," (ὑπέρχυσιν ἀγαθότητος) as one of the Greek Philosophers dared to say, as if it were a bowl overflowing, and this in plain words in his Discourse on the First and Second Causes.[5] Let us not ever look on this Generation as involuntary, like some natural overflow, hard to be retained, and by no means befitting our conception of Deity.

Since Gregory adopts the simile of the 'bowl', he most likely took this image from Plato (*Timaeus* 41d); yet "the Greek philosopher" who properly spoke of the overflow of goodness was not Plato, but Plotinus, who said (V 2,1):

> This, we may say, is the first act of generation: the One, perfect because it seeks nothing, has nothing, and need nothing, overflows, as it were, and its superabundance makes something other than itself (ὂν γὰρ τέλειον τῷ

3 Here, and in the following passages from *Contra Eunomium* III, I use Stuart Hall's translation; Stuart Hall's translation is quoted also for *CE* I (in: L. F. Mateo-Seco—J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la produciòn litteraria de Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988).

4 This parallel between Gregory of Nazianzus and Plotinus had already been found by Henry and Schwyzer in their edition of Plotinus. About the *Theology of Aristotle*, see the well-informed article by G. Endress, "Building the Library of Arabic Philosophy. Platonism and Aristotelianism in the sources of Al-Kindi", in: C. D'Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists. Proceedings of the Meeting of the European Science Foundation Network . . . held in Strasbourg, March 12–14, 2004*, Philosophia antiqua 107, Leiden 2007, 319–350, 333–334 (with bibliography).

5 Gregory states that this word can be found in the treatise "on the First and Second Causes", a title which is close to that of the Arabic version of Plotinus (*Theologia Aristotelis* X 10: "The first cause and the things that originate from it"), whereas the Greek title in Porphyrys's edition sounds περὶ γενέσεως καὶ τάξεως τῶν μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον (see Henry and Schwyzer' edition). It is possible, therefore, that Gregory was acquainted not with Porphyry's edition, but with an alternative one, which is preserved in the Arabic text. See J. M. Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism': its Background and nature", in P. J. Fedwick (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A sixteenthundred anniversary symposium*, Toronto, 1981, I, 137–220, 216; and C. Moreschini, *Filosofia e letteratura in Gregorio di Nazianzo*, Milano 1997, 51.

> μηδὲν ζητεῖν μηδὲ ἔχειν μηδὲ δεῖσθαι, οἷον ὑπερερρύη καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο) (transl. by A. H. Armstrong, The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge (MA) 1984).

It is probable that here Nazianzen confuses Plotinus with Plato, assigning to the former the image of the overflow of goodness which had been employed by the latter: he did not quote another unknown platonic philosopher, as it has been supposed. Certainly, Plotinus did not attribute such an 'overflowing' to the Goodness, but to the One. Nonetheless, it was usual for the Christians in IV century AD to interpret the Plotinian One as the Father, who is the principle of divine nature, and the Nous as the Son.[6]

Gregory of Nazianzus however denies that the generation of the Son was the involuntary product of the exceeding goodness of the Father: if so, did the Father generate the Son thanks to his will?[7] That seems difficult, because it contains the danger of Arianism. Perhaps Nyssen gives the required solution in *CE* III 6,19–20:

> If (to take an hypothetical example) someone were to give a flame a power of free choice, it would be clear that the flame would wish, along

6 This Plotinian passage was very common in writings of the Cappadocian Fathers; as Barnes asserts (M. R. Barnes, *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington 2001, 243 n. 84), "*Ennead* V 1 is one of the few works by Plotinus that we can be certain that Gregory knew. . . . *Ennead* V 1 was one of the first texts by Plotinus to have any influence on Christian thought". Barnes seems to mean Gregory of Nyssa, but he does not quote any passage of his. *Enenad* V 1 seems to have been used most by Basil in his *De Spiritu Sancto*, while Nazianzen is familiar with *Ennead* V 2. Plotinus' influence on the Cappadocian Fathers, however, has been underestimated by J. Rist (see "Basil's 'Neoplatonism'"; "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy", in: L. P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus,* Cambridge 1996, 386–413: 398–399).

7 This seems to have been Meijering's interpretation (cf. E. B. Meijering, *God Being History*, Amsterdam 1975, 105): Gregory of Nazianzus does not accept Plotinus' doctrine of a generation which implies a contradiction to the will of the Father. Further discussion of the problem in Barnes (*The Power of God*, 245 n. 96). Barnes supposes (*ibid.* 287–288) that the example of fire may have been taken from the *Chaldaean Oracles*, but I'm not convinced of that, because the example was common from the Apologetic onward. Also the 'bowl' of *oration* 29 (which, as I said, was wrongly introduced into the text by Nazianzen) is suggested (by Ruth Majercik) to have been taken from the *Chaldaean Oracles*, which Gregory knew thanks to Porphyry, who commented them (cf. R. Majercik, "A reminiscence of the *Chaldaean Oracles* at Gregory of Nazianzus, *or.* 29,2", *VigChr* 52 (1998) 286–292). Yet, I think that it is sound to maintain the hypothesis of a derivation from Plotinus, who is indicated as one of "the Greek *philosophers*"—not a composer of *loghia*, the so called 'Chaldaean Oracles'.

> with existing, also to emit light from itself, and having willed it would surely not lack the power, since its natural power would accomplish the purpose with the light at the same time as constituting the flame; for undeniably, if it were granted to it purposely to start the flame, it would envisage the combination of all together, the kindling of the fire, willing the light, and the light itself, since [p. 193] the movement of the free will would in no way impede the instant existence of the light. In the same way, just as in the example we have given, if you also grant to the Father the will for good, you will not separate the Son from the Father by that act of will (οὕτως . . . καὶ τῷ πατρὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν θέλημα συνομολογῶν οὐκ ἀποστήσεις διὰ τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν υἱόν).

Therefore, the Father's will seems (we might say) obliged by His very perfection, just as the One's generation was determined by his seeking and having nothing: the generation of the Son is thus produced by the perfection and sufficiency of the Father, who could not, as such, but generate. A similar explanation is given by Nyssen in *Contra Eunomium* I 533 (GNO I 181,1–3): οὐ χρονικῷ τινι διαστήματι τοῦ γεννητοῦ φωτὸς ἀποτεμνόμενον, ἀλλὰ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ μὲν ἐκλάμπον, τὴν δὲ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αἰτίαν ἔχον ἐκ τοῦ πρωτοτύπου φωτός.

The overflowing of goodness—Nazianzen asserts in another passage (*orat.* 38,9)—has its effects only *ad extra*, that is outside the Divinity, not in generating the Son or in 'producing' the Holy Spirit.[8]

1.2 *Eunomius, Gregory and Philo*

> III 5,24. In his own accustomed style Eunomius patches together the rags of verbal fragments cast off at crossroads, and once again poor old Isocrates is nibbled at for words and phrases to compile his case, and sometimes even the Hebrew Philo gets the same treatment, contributing fragments for him from his own works (ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων πόνων συνερανίζων αὐτῷ τὰ λεξείδια).

In this passage, the first criticism of Gregory is a stylistic one. Eunomius' *Apology* is similar to Isocrates' orations: he writes in short, parallel *kola* as Isocrates did, but his style is a poor imitation of his. Norden confirmed Gregory's judgment about Eunomius' imitation of Isocrates and considers Eunomius' as a model of

8 With regard to the problems involved in the passages of *oration* 29,2 and 38,9 see C. Moreschini, *I Padri Cappadoci*, Roma 2008, 176–179.

the 'Asian' prose of the IV century,[9] even though he doesn't condemn the style of his *Apology*.

The second question is that of seeing whether in this passage Eunomius is considered (rightly or wrongly) by Nyssen to be a disciple of Philo's, and if Nyssen's criticisms of Eunomius, as a consequence, also concern Philo. That Gregory also criticised Philo was Daniélou's interpretation,[10] which, however, has been rightly refuted by Runia[11] and Cassin.[12]

The following case seems different. We have to check this (apparently favorable) statement by Gregory against another passage, where Eunomius is blamed for having copied Philo. In III 7,8–9 Nyssen says:

> His (Eunomius') 'most supreme God, before the other things that are generated controls his own power (ὁ ἐξοχώτατος θεὸς πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα γεννητὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ κρατεῖ δυνάμεως).' The statement has been transferred word for word into his own book from Philo the Hebrew by our wordsmith, and whoever cares may detect Eunomius' plagiarism from the works of Philo themselves. I have drawn attention to this at the present time, not so much to sneer at the poverty of the wordsmith's own words and thoughts, as intending to demonstrate to the readers[13] the affinity between Eunomius' doctrines and the words of Jews.[14] For Philo's argument would not match his ideas word for word, if there were not some family likeness between his thought and Philo's. Thus we may find included in the Hebrew's text the words, 'God, before the other things that are generated (γεννητὰ),' and immediately after there is tacked on by the new Judaism, 'absolutely controls his own power.'

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9 Cf. E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, Leipzig 1898, II 558–562. An in-depth literary and linguistic analysis of *Contra Eunomium* III 5,23–25 is undertaken by M. Cassin (" 'Plumer Isocrate' ": usage polemique du vocabulaire comique chez Grégoire de Nysse", *REG* 121 (2008) 783–796), which draws attention to the satirical language used by Gregory: Eunomius's style is described as "un style artificiel et faussement beau". Cassin has further developed his observations about the style of Eunomius and the polemic of Nyssen (cfr. M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse. Polémique littéraire et exégèse dans le* Contre Eunome, Paris 2012, p. 148–187) :—Cassin's study is important for the topic of Nyssen's style too.

10 Cf. J. Daniélou, *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1970, 86–87.

11 Cf. D. T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature. A survey*, Assen—Minneapolis 1993, 245.

12 Cf. Cassin, "Plumer Isocrate", 794 n. 49

13 Τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσιν, omitted by Stuart Hall.

14 The plural is due to the fact that Gregory passes from criticism of Philo to criticism of Eunomius' Arianism, commonly considered by the Nicenes as a derivation from Judaism.

That Gregory criticised Philo in this passage is affirmed by both Runia and Barnes. Runia points out that if Nyssen proposes this interpretation of Eunomius' heresy, which is connected with Philo's assertion that God reigns over all that has been generated, then a polemic with Philo too is involved, because Nicene theology could not accept that God the Father reigns upon his Son, who has actually been generated.

Furthermore Barnes observes[15] that according to Gregory's criticism, Eunomius, like Philo, says that the *dynamis* exists outside God's nature and is subservient to God's will.[16] Gregory, therefore, criticizes Eunomius (and Philo with him) for teaching the existence of a separate *dynamis*. Philo did not separate causality from God's own nature, in *leg. all.* I 3 Philo describes true action as the property of God alone, but God's causality "is enacted through the activity of mediating powers", which are the *dynameis*.[17] The separation of power from God is exactly what Gregory considers Philonic in Eunomius' theology: the *dynamis* describes the intermediate status of the Son of God. Barnes also quotes two influential examples of such avoidance of any contact of God with the world: pseudoaristotelian *de mundo* 6 and Numenius. Indeed such a requirement, that is of mediation between the highest god, or the highest cause, and the world, was strongly asserted by Platonism and Christian theology from Clement of Alexandria onwards.

Let us turn again to Runia's work about Philo in Christian literature. Runia asserts that Gregory of Nazianzus never made use of Philo's works, but instead of perusing Nazianzen's orations or letters, he oddly limits himself to refuting Trisoglio's opinion that Nazianzen had employed Philo in his homily *On the love of the Poor* (*or.* 14).[18] Runia is right in his confutation of Trisoglio, but some of Philo's doctrines were taken from Gregory of Nazianzus, as I demonstrated in an article of mine.[19] Besides, in my edition of *orations* 38–41[20] I proposed that Gregory took from Philo his interpretation of the trees of Paradise, which are the symbol of Adam's thoughts, (and perhaps also of the tree of knowledge, which symbolizes the *theoria*) (*orat.* 38,12). Philo had proposed a similar

15 Barnes, *The Power of God*, 227.

16 Runia, *Philo of Alexandria*, 229–233.

17 Cf. *Abraham* 24,122; *specc. Legg.* I 329; *mut. nom.* 29.

18 F. Trisoglio, "Filone Alessandrino e l'esegesi cristiana: contributo alla conoscenza dell'influenza esercitato da Filone sul IV secolo, specificatamente in Gregorio di Nazianzo", in: I. Temporini—W. Haase (eds.), *ANRW* II 21.1, Berlin—New York 1985, 588–730.

19 Cf. C. Moreschini, *Filosofia e Letteratura*, 31–53.

20 Cf. Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours*, 38–41, intr., éd. et notes C. Moreschini, trad. P. Gallay, SC 348, Paris 1990, 128–129.

explanation in *plant.* 36–37. Philo affirms that it is necessary to employ the allegoric method for this explanation of the passage of Gen. 2,15:

> Indeed, the sacred oracles most evidently afford us the clues for the use of this method. For they say that in the garden there are trees in no way resembling those with which we are familiar, but trees of Life, of Immortality, of Knowledge, of Apprehension, of Understanding, of the Conception of the good and evil. And these can be no growths of earthly soil, but must be those of the responsible soul [...] We must conceive therefore that the bountiful God plants in the soul as it were a garden of virtues and of the modes of conduct corresponding to each of them, a garden that brings the soul to perfect happiness. (tr. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge (MA) / London 1954)

1.3 *Divine Simplicity*

> III 6,17. With the simple (ἁπλῆς) and omnipotent nature (φύσεως) all things are understood as together and simultaneous: he both wills the good and possesses what he wills. In the eternal nature the good and the eternal will is envisaged as everlastingly actual, realized and substantial,[21] neither arising at a particular starting-point, nor conceivable without what is willed.

This is a tenet of primal importance in Christian Platonism. Gregory repeats it elsewhere: "the simple, pure and unique nature, immovable and unalterable, which is always the same and never abandon itself... it remains without changing in the good and doesn't see any boundary in itself" (*Cant.* V [GNO VI 158,8–12]); "The uncreated nature is far away from such a distinction, inasmuch as it does not have good as something acquired... but because it is by nature what goodness is in itself... and is attested even by our opponents to be the fount of goodness, simple, uniform and un compounded" (*CE* I 276).

Divine nature, whatever it is, is 'simple', that is, its whole remain the same and does not have in itself parts or differences, because difference means something which is not divine: therefore God would be imperfect. Already Origen had stated (*princ.* I 6,4 in Rufinus' translation) that divine nature is an

21 I am not totally convinced that this is the exact translation of ἐνούσιον and ἐνυπόστατον: perhaps a better translation would be: 'existing in a substance' and 'existing in an hypostasis'. ἐνυπόστατον then becomes a specific term of post-Chalcedonian Christology.

"intellectualis natura[22] simplex". God is a not composed nature; therefore his characteristic is simplicity (Gregory of Nazianzus, *or*. 38,7; 40,7) and the sameness of his substance; Basil, *de Spiritu Sancto* VI 15 ("simple"); IX 22 ("without parts"); XVIII 45 ("not composed"); Nyssen, *virg.* 11,2: "the nature of the beauty which is simple, immaterial, formless". God's simplicity had already been fully exploited by a monotheist like Philo (cf. *legg. alleg.* II 2,2–3), or by Plotinus, thanks to his doctrine of the One, which is absolute simplicity: II 9,1: "Since, then, the simple nature of the Good appears to be also primal (for all that is not primal is not simple)"; V 5,6: "this name (One) is completely indicative of simplicity"; V 5,10: "think . . . that he is the Good . . . that he is the One (for he is simple and first)".[23] Christian theologians had to apply absolute simplicity either to the Father (as Clement did) or to God.

From this collection of texts we may infer the importance the doctrine of God's simplicity had for the Cappadocian Fathers and (neo)Platonism. But a problem arises from the assertion of simplicity: how can it fit with the multiplicity, equally attested in Nyssen, of the divine excellences? The problem has been touched by Radde-Gallwitz.[24] His conclusion is that "with the notion of the divine goods as propria, Gregory does not need for them to be identical with the divine nature in order for them to be necessary concomitants of the divine nature"[25]—not very clear, in my opinion. Simplicity in God means the unity of all His excellences (somehow according to Richard Cross' theory of the 'Universals' in God).

1.4 *God and the Good*

> III 6,18. Since therefore the Only-begotten God is by nature the Good, or rather beyond every Good (ἐπεὶ οὖν φύσει τὸ ἀγαθόν, μᾶλλον δὲ παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ ἐπέκεινα ὁ μονογενὴς θεός), and the Good is not unintended by the Father, this clearly demonstrates that the bond (συνάφεια) of the Son with the Father is immediate, and also that the will which exists for ever in

22 Origen—Rufinus employs the word *natura*, just as φύσις in Nyssen's passage.

23 Other examples can, of course, be found in J. H. Sleeman—G. Pollet (eds.), *Lexicon Plotinianum*, Leiden—Leuven 1980; besides: J. P. Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism. A Study in ancient Platonic Theology*, Hanover—London 1991, 91–149, "The Mystical Monotheism of Plotinus", here 93–111.

24 A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009.

25 A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea*, 207.

> (ἐνυπάρχον) the good nature is not expelled nor excluded by the inseparable bond.

Gregory here asserts that the Son is 'beyond every good': such transcendence was usually considered (by the School of Alexandria for instance) to be typical of the Father rather than of the Son. But since the Son is a perfect image of the Archetypal Goodness, thus also the Son is good beyond every goodness.

That God is beyond goodness is also affirmed by Gregory in his early work, *De virginitate* (X 1): ὃ περὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἐπέκεινα παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ θεωρεῖται. It is also found in *Eccl.* VII (GNO VII 406,9–18): τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἤτοι ὑπὲρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτό τε ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐστι; in *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44 184A): Θεὸς . . . παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ νοουμένου τε καὶ καταλαμβανομένου ἐπέκεινα ὤν; in *Inscr.* I 1 (GNO V 26,12): τὸ ἀληθῶς ἀγαθὸν ἤτοι τὸ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ; *Beat.* VIII (GNO VII.2 164, 13–14); *An et res.* 93A; *Ref.* 8.

It is evident that such an emphasis testifies to the development of the famous Platonic doctrine (*Resp.* 509a) of the good as being ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας;[26] it can already be found in Philo, *opif.* 8: God is "better than the good itself and the beautiful itself" (κρείττων ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν), and *praem*, 40: ὃ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ κρεῖττον. According to Aubineau,[27] Gregory could have deduced this theory of God's absolute transcendence from Plotinus (*Enn.* I 6,9), rather than from Philo. It is difficult to establish whether it was one or the other writer, however, as they were both known (although in different ways) to Gregory of Nyssa.

1.5 *God as the Fullness of Good*

> III 1,49. Yet the one who is in the bosom of the Father never allows the Paternal bosom to be thought empty of himself. So it is not as something external put into his bosom, but because he is the fullness of all goodness, the one who is 'in the beginning' (Jn 1.1) is deemed to be in the Father, not waiting [p. 21] to be generated in him by creation, so that the Father might not ever be deemed wanting in good things. Rather, the one deemed to be in the eternity of the Father's Godhead is forever in him, being Power, Life, Truth, Light, Wisdom, and so on.

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26 Cf. W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, Wiesbaden 1955, 44.

27 See Grégoire de Nysse, *Traité de la virginité*, éd. et trad. M. Aubineau, SC 119, Paris 1966, 373.

Here Nyssen unifies the Christian teaching about God, who is the totality of the good (cf. Ioh. 1,16: ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ) e the Neoplatonic tenet that God is the first good. This he asserts also in *An. et res.* (PG 44 92C): "the nature which is above all human thought and above all *dynameis* is the totality of the good (τῶν ἀγαθῶν οὖσα τὸ πλήρωμα)."

Other examples of this expression in Gregory of Nyssa are *CE.* III 4,45; 6,7; 7,20–21; *Inscr.* 58,5; 87,17; *Opif.* 184,20. It was already employed by Eusebius of Caesarea, as one of Christ's titles (see e.g. *Theol. Eccl.* III 2,16 and *In Psalmos* PG 21, 860C).

1.6 *Nyssen, Nazianzen, and Plutarch*

Criticizing Eunomius' doctrines (III 10,40–42), Gregory asks himself where he came upon such ideas about the Deity, and since he could not find the basis for such absurdities in the Scriptures, he supposed that the heretic had admired Egyptian myths, and mixed their views with his own teachings about the Only-begotten. They can find no support for their impiety in the divine scripture, and their argument gets its strength from hieroglyphic characters:

> It is reported that they say that their outlandish idol-making, when they attach certain animal forms to human bodies, are a symbol of their mixed nature, which they call a daemon, and that this is more refined than human nature and superior in power to our nature, but does not have divinity unmixed or undiluted, but combined with mental life (physis)[28] and corporeal sensation, so that it receives pleasure and pain, none of which is true of the unbegotten God. They too use this concept,[29] attributing unbegottenness to what in their thinking is the transcendent God. It seems therefore to us that this clever theologian has brought Anubis, Isis or Osiris from the dark Egyptian shrines into the Christian Gospel, without actually confessing the names; though there is surely no difference in the impiety between one who confesses the names of the idols, and the one who holds these opinions of them in himself, while avoiding the names.

As Balas has observed, [30] in his description of the Egyptian religion and of the demons who are worshiped by the Egyptians, Gregory seems to have been

28 I cannot understand why Stuart Hall translates ψυχῆς φύσει in this way.

29 Ὄνομα in the text.

30 See D. L. Balàs, *Μετουσία θεοῦ. Man's participation in God's perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Roma 1966, 168–169—an old, but still valuable book.

informed by Plutarch (*de Iside et Osiride* 25,360DE): Plutarch, indeed, asserts: "Better, therefore, is the view of those who take the stories about Typhon, Osiris and Isis to be the experiences neither of gods nor of men, but of great daemons"[31] and then explains that Egyptian demonology agrees with that of Plato, Xenocrates and the Stoics.

As far as the knowledge of Plutarch by the Cappadocian Fathers is concerned, it is probable that Nazianzen also knew some Plutarchean works. At the end of his *or.* 31, Gregory tells us how he had previously tried to explain to himself the mutual relations of the divine Persons (chap. 31). He confesses that all his attempts had been unsuccessful, since no example had satisfactorily clarified the core of the Trinity for him: the unity and sameness of the substance and the difference and distinction of the hypostasis (chap. 33).

Some of the examples presented by Gregory are traditional and go back to the Apologetic, such as the example of the source, the stream and the river (chap. 31), or of the sun, the ray and the light (chap. 32). Then Nazianzen adds another one, which is strange and which I could not find elsewhere in Christian literature (chap. 32, at the end):

> I have also heard that *someone has suggested* an illustration of the following kind. A ray of the Sun flashing upon a wall and trembling with the movement of the moisture which the beam has taken up in mid air (μαρμαρυγήν τινα ἡλιακὴν τοίχῳ προσαστράπτουσαν καὶ περιτρέμουσαν ἐξ ὑδάτων κινήσεως), and then, being checked by the hard body, has set up a strange quivering. For it quivers with many rapid movements, and is not one rather than it is many, nor yet many rather than one; because by the swiftness of its union and separating it escapes before the eye can see it.

Gregory, then, had not discovered this explanation, but he had heard or read (ἀκούω) it. Yet he does not inform us where. I suppose that the passage Gregory refers to might be the following (Plutarch, *de facie in orbe lunae* 23,963B):

> It happens that those who have placed themselves in the path of reflected rays see not only the object illumined but also what illuminates it. For example, if when a ray rebounds from water to a wall the eye is situated in the place that is itself illumined by the reflection, the eye discerns all three things, the reflected ray and the water that causes the reflection and the sun itself, the source of the light which has been reflected by impinging upon the water (ὅταν γὰρ αὐγῆς ἀφ᾽ ὕδατος πρὸς τοίχον ἁλλομένης ὄψις

31 Transl. by J. Gwyn Griffiths, University of Wales Press 1970, p. 155.

> ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ πεφοτισμένῳ κατὰ τὴν ἀνάκλασιν τόπῳ γένηται, τὰ τρία καθορᾷ, τήν τ᾽ἀνακλωμένην αὐγὴν καὶ τὸ ποιοῦν ὕδωρ τὴν ἀνάκλασιν καὶ τον ἥλιον αὐτὸν ἀφ᾽ οὗ τὸ φῶς τῷ ὕδατι προσπῖπτον ἀνακέκλασται).

Therefore not only Basil knew Plutarch (in his sermon *contra usurarios*), but also Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus, in the passages quoted above.

2 Gregory and Paganism

2.1 *A Christian Interpretation of Homer*

> III 2,77. It pleased him to say that begotten being was closely associated with the title, 'Son'; like people half asleep, they[32] at once approved his words. Then he switched his argument back to the opposite, and denies the relationship of the Son to the one who begot him; again his best friends give their consent to this too, just as the shadows of physical bodies automatically accommodate their shape to the movement of their model, crawling in whatever direction he wants, and even accepting it if he contradicts himself. This is a new form of the Homeric potion, not changing the bodies of those affected by the drug into irrational beasts, but effecting the transformation of their minds into irrationality.

Here Gregory alludes to the famous episode of the transformation of Odysseus' friends into animals (cf. *Odyss*. X 210 ss.). It is well known that Neo-Platonists favored Homer as an authoritative source to confirm their doctrines. Now Gregory says that this new form of the Homeric potion (that is, the perversion of heresy) changes the minds, not the bodies, of humans into animals. This sounds Porphyrian. Porphyry asserted that metempsychosis did not affect the transformation of the body, but that of wicked souls into still more beastly ones.[33] We can find such an interpretation in Boethius (*consol.* IV 3,35–39):

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32 Here Gregory speaks of those who approved Eunomius' doctrine (III 2,75).

33 With regard to the question of metempsychosis, whether it must be understood literally, as the passage from the body of a human to the body of an animal, or only referring to the greater and greater corruption of the morals due to the metempsychosis of perverted men, see H. Dörrie, "Kontroversen um die Seelenwanderungen im kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus", *Hermes* 85 (1957) 414–435, reprint in: *Platonica Minora*, München 1976, 420–440: 428–438.

haec venena potentius / detrahunt hominem sibi, / dire quae penitus meant / nec nocentia corpori / mentis vulnere saeviunt.[34] The problem of Christians interpretations of Homer has been discussed also by J. Pepin,[35] but he does not examine this passage of Nyssen.

2.2 *The Origin of Idolatry*

> III 3,5–7. To show that I am not making improbable suppositions, I will call as credible testimony to my case the error still prevalent among the Greeks. They were filled with awe in their untrained and infantile mind by the beauties of creation, and did not use the wonder of what they saw as a guide and pointer to the thought of the transcendent beauty, but [p. 109] stopped short at what they could comprehend, and felt awe towards every part of creation by itself. As a consequence of this, they did not fix their idea of the divine on any single one of the things they saw, but reckoned every visible thing in creation to be divine. 6. Thus for the Egyptians, as the error had more effect on their thoughts about the things of the mind the multiple shapes of demons were reckoned as divine beings.[36] Among the Babylonians the invariable revolution of the heavenly sphere was thought to be a god, whom they also called Bêl. In the same way the Greek nonsense made gods individually of the seven that followed, and bowed down in their various ways according to their individual fictitious stories. [...] 7. In addition, the upper air itself, and the atmosphere lying beneath it, the land and the sea and the place below ground, and whatever on earth is serviceable and necessary for human life, none was devoid, they taught, of divine nature, but to every one of them they bowed down, through some one of the conspicuous things in creation enslaving themselves to all the subsequent parts of it; so that if even for them reverence for the created order had been seen as forbidden from the start, they would not have wandered off into the falsehood of polytheism.

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34 This passage has been compared by Gruber with Dio Chrys. *or.* 33,58 (Cf. J. Gruber, *Kommentar zu Boethius,* De consolatione philosophiae, Berlin—New York 20062, *ad locum*). But the meaning of the Boethian lines does not correspond exactly to what Dio says.

35 See J. Pépin, "The Platonic and Christian Ulysses", in: D. J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, Norfolk (VA) 1982, 3–20.

36 In this regard cf. III 10,40–42, discussed above (pp. 604–605).

This (perhaps too) long quotation is justified by the keenness of Nyssen's explanation of the rise of barbarous and Greek idolatry. Gregory Nazianzen contrasts, as it was usual, Christian faith and idolatry,[37] but Nyssen's observations are much more grounded from a historical point of view. More exactly, he derives Babylonians idolatry and the worship of Bel from astrology. Referring to the doctrine of Zeno the Stoic, Cicero says that the stars are divine because they have their origin in the ether and inhabit the skies (*Nat. deor.* II 15,42). Also Diodorus Siculus (*Biblioth.* II 30–31) wrote about the pantheon of the Mesopotamian cosmos in his account of Chaldaean astrology. He asserts that the Chaldaeans considered the planets as instrumental in predicting the future and as interpreters to mankind of the will of the gods. This doctrine of the Mesopotamian religion was, therefore, already widespread in Greece several centuries before Gregory of Nyssa.[38]

Also the statement that the Greeks identified their gods with the seven planets is exact: we can find such an identification in Plato's later dialogues and in Hellenistic science and religion. Pagan cults and religions were still present among the Greeks in late fourth century AD, and Gregory was aware of them as of other doctrines, such as the henotheism, which we shall shortly consider.

2.3 *Henotheism*

> III 8,43. He says furthermore that the Son's being is under the lordship of the Father. His actual words are: [p. 255] 'The one who is and lives because of the Father does not possess this rank as his own, since the being which holds even him under his lordship attracts to itself the concept of that which is.' If one of the outside philosophers[39] likes to think that, he need not bother about the Gospels and the rest of the inspired scriptures: what has Christian thought to do with the philosophy[40] made foolish (cf 1 Cor 1.20)? If however he is leaning on scriptural ideas, let him show us something from the voice of the saints, and we will be silent.

Now Nyssen attacks Eunomius not for what is typical of his heresy, namely considering the Son as a creature of the Father, or denying his divine nature,

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37 See *oration* 39, 5–6.

38 See F. Rochberg, "The Heavens and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia: The View from a Polytheistic Cosmology", in: B. Pongratz-Leisten (ed.), *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*, Winona Lake (IN) 2011, 117–136: 131–133.

39 The text, however, says: σοφῶν.

40 In the text: σοφία.

but for considering the Son in the same way as Greek philosophers did ("one of the outside philosophers", not one of the heretics, he says). The Son as conceived by Eunomius is under the lordship of the Father, as the inferior gods of paganism are under the lordship of the most eminent one.

Eunomius' theology, which Nyssen rejects, is an henotheistic theology, a well known and well studied religious phenomenon of late antiquity[41]—but Nyssen's passage has not hitherto been taken into consideration. It is important, however, because it is a 4th century Christian testimony to the existence of henotheism, which is rejected. Maybe Nyssen (like Nazianzen) read the works of Julian the Emperor[42] which were well known among pagan intellectuals of the fourth century, particularly the *Contra Galilaeos*: a passage of this work may be fit to quote (cf. Cyrill. Alex., *Contra Iulianum* II 43–44):

> Plato calls the sun and the moon, the stars and the sky "visible gods", but these are images of invisible gods. The sun that appears to our eyes is the image of an intelligible and invisible sun, and the moon we see is an image, and every star is an image of an intelligible star. So Plato knows that those intelligible and invisible gods are inherent in the Demiurge, coexist with it, and have had life and origin from it.

What Nyssen says shortly after (III 9,59–60) explains perfectly what we are supposing:

> What more can *those who stick with Greek religion*[43] produce to insult our teaching? [...] To think that godliness ought to be thought of as in doctrines alone, whom does that typify more that the Greeks? For they too claim that according to their thinking there is something more convincing that what we preach, and some of them postulate a great God standing supreme above the rest, and profess faith in certain subordinate powers, differing indeed from each other as greater or less by some order and sequence, all equally subject to their superior. 60. This then is what the teachers of the *new idolatry* proclaim.

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41 Bibliography on this question is immense, and it is impossible to present even just a summary of it here. We mention only, e.g. G. Sfameni Gasparro, *Dio unico, pluralità e monarchia divina*, Brescia 2010, 109–129, which summarizes and fully discusses previous studies.

42 With regard to Julian's theology see also S. Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church. Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome*, Berkeley—Los Angeles 2012.

43 In the text, more generally: τῷ Ἑλληνισμῷ.

According to Nissen, henotheistic theology is not a divine revelation, but the construction of rationality and of philosophy, which Greeks use to practice: the same is, as he says, 'a new idolatry', the idolatry of Eunomius. Indeed, doctrines of that kind (i.e., philosophical—religious), he states elsewhere (cf. *CE* III 9,56), were the object of studies by pagan intellectuals: even if some of them come upon the truth, because they arrive at conceiving a sort of monotheistic religion not very different from Christian religion, yet nonetheless they remain far away from the faith.

In this regard, it is useful to read Themistius's *Oration* 5 (Ὑπατικός, εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Ἰοβιανόν), pronounced in the Constantinople Senate in 364, on the occasion of Jovian's "edict of toleration", which revoked the anti-Christian edicts issued by Julian in the preceding two years. This edict was intended to establish religious tolerance towards the Christians, so the two religions (69C: ἑκατέρα θρησκεία) were no longer in conflict, nor was there any reason for them to be. Themistius was pleased with this tolerance. God, he affirmed, ensured that the human soul's predisposition to religion was inherent in all, but wanted that the τρόπος τῆς θεραπείας depended on the will of the individual (7 68A). Freedom of religion meant that there was a competition in religiousness between the various peoples of the empire. The emperor also held that the great, true judge of this competition is only one, the unknown god, but that many roads lead to him.[44] The Lord of the Universe himself is pleased with this variety of religions: he wants the various peoples (Syrians, Greeks, Egyptians) to adore him in the way each of them pleases (9 70A).

It is true, Themistius speaks of freedom of religion, not of henotheism,[45] but in substance, he also affirms that a supreme god exists, who is superior to the gods of the various peoples of the empire.

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44 The similarity between these images and Symmachus' famous affirmation (*Relatio* III 9): *uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum* is evident (and has already been highlighted by scholars).

45 See, e.g. A. H. Armstrong, "The Way and the Ways: Religious Tolerance in the Fourth Century A.D.", *VigChr* 38 (1984) 1–17: 8–9; C. Ando, "Pagan Apologetics and Christian Intolerance in the Ages of Themistius and Augustine", *JECS* 4 (1996) 171–207: 179–180; I. Sandwell, "Pagan Conceptions of Monotheism in the Fourth Century: The Example of Libanius and Themistius", in: S. Mitchell—P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *Monotheism between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity*, Leuven—Walpole 2010, 101–126, and, more generally: M. Frede, "The case for pagan monotheism in Greek and Graeco-Roman antiquity", in: S. Mitchell—P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God. Pagan monotheism in the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 2010, 53–81; A. Fürst, "Monotheism between cult and politics: the themes of the ancient debate between pagan and Christian monotheism", *ibid.*, 82–99.

Indeed, when he affirms that Syrians, Greeks and Egyptians all adore the gods of their own nations, Themistius does not hold that each of these gods identifies with the supreme god, but distinguishes them from him, because it is precisely the supreme god who wants these gods to be adored.

Gregory wrote the *Contra Eunomium* between 380 and 381 in Constantinople: Themistius pronounced his oration, also in Constantinople, in 364. It is possible (although, admittedly, it is a hypothesis) that Gregory knew it[46] and the pagans' discussions on the question of henotheism were those expressed in Themistius's speech.

2.4 *Polemic Against Logic*

> III 5,44. Also[47] the Whatsit (σκινδαψός) is called unbegotten, and so too is the Twang (βλίτυρι), the Minotaur is unbegotten, and so are Cyclops, Scylla and Chimera, not because they exist unbegotten, but because they have never existed at all.

These words and the idea that they have no meaning at all can be found also in Gregory of Nazianzus (*orat.* 25,5), who in his praise of the cynic Maximus, asserts that Maximus' philosophy does not imagine "ideal states (as Plato did) conjured up with words (scindapses, as it were, to use their own expression, and tragelaphs, that is, just so many meaningless sounds), or in what they call categories and logical reductions and syntheses".

Stuart Hall observes that "skindapsos", translated "Whatsit", is defined according to the lexicon (i.e., to LSJ) first as "a four-stringed musical instrument", but chiefly in its secondary meaning of a word without meaning, a "what d'ye call it", a "so-and-so". Likewise, "blityri", translated as "Twang", is explained as "The twang of a harp-string", and hence "a meaningless word".

Now, it is likely that to consider meaningless (or not) words like "blityri" and "skyndapsos", were a question of logics. Indeed, Galen (*de differentia pulsuum* III 4 = SVF II 149), arguing against some unknown philosophers, affirms that, contrarily to what they supposed, that "blityri" and "skyndapsos" are meaningless, those words do have a meaning: "blityri" means 'stroke', that is, a sound produced by striking, and "skindapsos is not only the name of a servant", but also the name of a musical instrument. Later, another philosopher, Hermias of Alexandria states (*In Platonis Phaedrum Scholia* III 225–226 Lucarini—Moreschini) that Aristotle

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46 Gregory of Nazianzen knows Themistius, to whom he sends a number of letters.

47 I add this word to the translation of Stuart Hall.

> looks for four presuppositions in every reasoning: two simple ones, of the type 'if it is' and 'what it is', and two composite ones, of the type 'it is' and 'why it is'. For example, with regard to the void, he asks 'if it is'; or 'if the soul is and if the *skindapsos* is'. With regard to evident things, it is not necessary to question if such a thing 'is', but to examine 'what it is', while with regard to non-evident things, the question should also be 'if it is'. Indeed, no-one affirms what *skindapsos*, is before learning if it is.

Also in the West, in the VI century, Boethius, basing himself on the peripatetic and neo-Platonic tradition, uses *scyndapsos* and *blityri* as examples of words without meaning: they are *articulatae voces quarum per se significatio non potest inveniri, ut scyndapsos* (*In Aristot.* Περὶ ἑρμηνείας *comm. secundus*, 53,28–29 Meiser), and also (59,19–27): *nomen vero quamquam subiaceat elementis, prius tamen quam ad aliquam subiectae rei significationem ponatur, per se nihil designat*—that is, the word means something not in itself, but by convention:

> *ut cum dicimus 'scyndapsos' vel 'hereceddy'. Haec per se nihil quidem significant, sed si ad subiectae alicuius rei significationem ponantur, ut dicatur vel homo 'scyndapsos' vel lapis 'hereceddy', tunc hoc quod per se nihil significat positione et secundum ponentis quoddam placitum designabit.*[48]

Further testimony to Gregory's knowledge of pagan logics is given by

> III 6,69. For once a beginning is conceded, it is impossible not to agree also to the consequence (τὸ ἑπόμενον).

Here Gregory employs Stoic syllogism: the συνημμένον (scl. ἀξίωμα) is the conditional syllogism: "if it is day, there is the sun" (SVF II 213 etc.); προηγούμενον is the premise and τὸ ἑπόμενον is the consequence.

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48 The same observation is made for *blityri*, a *vox* which has no meaning in itself, but assumes one if introduced into a discussion as the name for something (*posita tamen ut alicui nomen sit significabit*) (p. 5,14–15). Cf. also further on (54,5–7): *sunt quoque quaedam voces litteris syllabisque compositae, quae nullam habeant significatione, ut est blityri.*

Incarnational Ontology and Paschal Transformation: *Acts* 2,36 in *Contra Eunomium* III 3

Joseph S. O'Leary

The tension between an Antiochene *homo assumptus* model and an Alexandrian *logos-sarx* model, running through fourth century Christology, reflects the tension between the two sources of Christian theology, with the Antiochenes seen as attempting to cleave to the narrative, historical nature of the biblical record while the Alexandrians are tempted to a metaphysical dehistoricization of Christology. But it also reflects a tension within the New Testament itself between the quasi-adoptionist, two-stage Christology found in the formula in *Romans* 1,3–4 that contrasts the prepaschal Son of David and the paschal Son of God. Paul enhances this contrast by adding the phrases 'according to the flesh' and 'according to the Spirit of holiness.'[1] This progressive Christological model is in tension with Paul's emphasis elsewhere on Christ's status as pre-existent Son (*Gal* 4,4, 1 *Cor* 8,6, *Phil* 2,6). According to another archaic formula, in *Acts* 2,36, Jesus is made both Lord and Christ at his resurrection, in seeming contradiction with Luke's earlier account of an angelic acclamation of the child Jesus as 'Christ the Lord' (*Lk* 2,11).[2]

Some have suggested that such tensions can be resolved if we treat the pre-existence language as indicating the ontological status of Christ in a synchronic way, rather than as narrating his pre-history, despite its narrative guise.[3] Rather than a clash of narratives, we would then have an ontological overview, on the basis of which the progressive narrative of the exaltation of Jesus can be set forth freely. This would still leave tensions between three versions of the latter, for the resurrection, the baptism and the conception are successively viewed as the moment when he became Lord and Christ. Such tensions are common, too, in Jewish apocalyptic schemas, which form the matrix of the earliest Christology, and which pass easily from talk of a coming Son of Man or messianic figure to talk of his pre-existence in God's counsels from the beginning.

Studying Gregory of Nyssa's handling of *Acts* 2,36 in *Contra Eunomium* III 3, I shall argue that despite his sensitivity to the dynamic and soteriological

1 See C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, Edinburgh 1985, 57.

2 Indeed, some find hints of a pre-existence Christology in Luke; see R. Roukema, *Jesus, Gnosis and Dogma*, New York 2010.

3 I thank John Muddiman for this suggestion.

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thrust of the biblical texts, he casts the paschal mystery in the mould of an ontology of divinization, in a way that lessens the impact of the biblical narrative. Heir to the Alexandrian tradition, he builds on Athanasius's picture of how the Logos dwells within the humanity of Christ, causing it to advance beyond human nature and to be divinized (*Contra Arianos* III 53). But he offers a dynamic and flexible narrative of this transformation, with constant reference to the soteriological significance of the transformative process.[4] There is an Origenian mobility here, which resists fixation on ontological schemas. The end result is to renew and enrich metaphysical Christology, with some stimulus from Scripture, but basically at the expense of the biblical narrative, which is brought into view and interpreted too exclusively in light of the ontological vision.

Arius and Athanasius

Nicene orthodoxy excludes any idea of growth or advance in the being of the eternal Logos. But the Arian controversy also generated nervousness about talking too freely of the growth of the human Jesus. Arius had tried, it seems, to retrieve a narrative of the human Jesus growing toward his status as Christ, and this adoptionist emphasis bolstered his subordinationist account of the being of the Logos. Rudolf Lorenz notes a likeness with Origen's account of the preexistent soul of Christ, united with the Logos in virtue of its loving fidelity.[5] Robert Gregg and Dennis Groh write: 'The resurrection is the occasion par excellence in which God certifies the quality of the Son's life and promotes him to that position of glory which he held proleptically until then.'[6] This soteriological vision was not to play a major role in the Arian controversy, which focussed instead on the themes of divine transcendence and the role of the Logos in creation. Nor did Eunomius and the Cappadocians do anything to revive a soteriological, adoptionist image of Arianism. Eunomius affirms divine transcendence first of all, confessing one God according to natural ἔννοια and the teaching of the Fathers, and stressing his ingenerateness (*Apol.* 7). When

4 'The modality of the union is systematically explained by the movement of the incarnation in function of its soteriological goal' (H. Grelier, "Comment décrire l'humanité du Christ sans introduire une quaternité en Dieu? La controverse de Grégoire de Nysse contre Apolinaire de Laodicée", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism, Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008*), SVigChr 106, Leiden, Boston 2011, 541–556.

5 R. Lorenz, *Arius judaizans*, Göttingen 1980.

6 R. Gregg – D. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation*, London 1981, 24.

he comes to talk of the Son, it is to stress first of all that he is γέννημα καὶ ποίημα (*Apol.* 12).

Gregg and Groh would see the Arians' response to adoptionist suggestions in the New Testament as part of a comprehensive exegetical and theological vision. But if the Arians were primarily concerned with the ontology of the Logos (or became so in the straits of controversy), then their use of adoptionist-sounding texts appears opportunistic, an exploitation of words ripped from their context for controversial purposes. Athanasius and the Cappadocians accuse the Arians of failing to read the text according to its σκοπός, a σκοπός they themselves characterize in quite stark doctrinal terms, as they prescribe what texts are to be ascribed to Christ's human nature, what to his divine. Thus in his rebuttal of the Arian interpretation of 'made' in *Acts* 2,36 and *Heb* 3,2 and 'created' in *Prov* 8,22, Athanasius concentrates on the Incarnation, paying scant attention to the particular paschal reference of the two New Testament texts. God 'made' Christ in making his humanity at the time of the Incarnation. Here we see one instance of how the ontology of incarnation tends to prevail over the eventhood of the paschal mystery. To be sure, Athanasius does connect the incarnation with the paschal mystery: 'made' applies not to the Word as such but to his 'putting on a body which was originate and made, and such as He can offer for us' (*Contra Arianos* II 8). But conversely and even more, he reads the paschal mystery in light of the incarnation, stressing the latter: 'Peter, after saying, "He has made Lord and Christ," straightway added, "this Jesus whom you crucified"; which makes it plain . . . that not the Essence of the Word, but He according to His manhood is said to have been made' (II 12).

The reference of *Acts* 2,36, then, is not to Theology ('Peter said not that the Essence of the Son was made') but to the Economy, in which the paschal exaltation manifests what has already been determined by the Incarnation: it refers to 'His Lordship over us, which "became" when He became man, and, redeeming all by the Cross, became Lord of all and King' (II 14). Being made Lord and Christ is not something that happens to the human nature of Jesus (for it enjoys that status from the beginning of its existence) but something that happens to us: Christ 'what He is ever, that He then is made according to the flesh; and, having redeemed all, He becomes thereby again Lord of quick and dead' (*ib.*). The 'then' here refers to the incarnation as such, and the 'again' to the paschal manifestation of Christ's Lordship.

Eunomius and Basil

In the conclusion of his *Apology*, which elaborates on the confession of faith given in *Apol.* 5, Eunomius cites *Acts* 2,36 alongside *Prov* 8,22 as proof that the

Son is made. The speaker, Peter, is acclaimed as a μάρτυς ἀξιόπιστις (*Apol.* 26). There is no reference to a postpaschal exaltation; the text is seen as expressing Peter's godgiven insight into the ontological status of Christ.

Basil replies that 'this witness (μαρτυρία) has nothing to do with what is being investigated' (*CE* II 2). Arguing that Scripture never uses the ἐπίνοια ποίημα of the Son, and that Eunomius is boldly taking it on himself to change the names of the Lord, he affirms that Peter is not thinking of the hypostasis of the Only-Begotten before the ages but of the one who emptied himself in the form of a slave. Peter is not presenting a formula (τρόπος) of theology but τοὺς τῆς οἰκονομίας λόγους (II 3). The phrase 'this Jesus whom you crucified' shows that the 'him' who is made both Lord and Christ is none other than the crucified Jesus, not the eternal Word. Moreover, 'Lord' is a name of ἐξουσία, not οὐσία, and the phrase shows that God has given his δεσποτεία to Jesus; it does not concern his coming into being (εἰς τό εἶναι πάροδον). Basil does not explicitly refer this 'making' to the exaltation of the crucified, his heavenly enthronement as Messiah; he may hold that Jesus is Lord and Christ from the first moment of his conception. Basil's contrast of Theology and Economy here follows in the tracks of Athanasius.

This confinement of *Acts* 2,36 to the register of the Economy gives Eunomius an opportunity that he gleefully seizes on. Eunomius notes Basil's refusal to take 'made' as applying to the being of the Son, and accuses him of being ashamed of the Cross, and of introducing two Christs and two Lords, the Word who was in the beginning and the one crucified in weakness (Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* III 3,15). It is likely that the text Luke quotes probably referred simply to Jesus' paschal exaltation, with no awareness of a preexistent status of Christ. In subordinating this primitive two-stage Christology to a Christology of the preexistent Logos, Basil is obliged to tell two stories. In one story God elevates the crucified Jesus and gives him lordship, in the other the eternal Son takes on the form of a slave and it is this very assumption that gives the humanity of Jesus its lordship. Athanasius emphasizes the latter story at the expense of the former, but the tension between them transpires more markedly in Basil. Keeping the eternal Word free of any taint of createdness, Basil comes close to dissociating him from 'this Jesus, whom you crucified'; hence the accusation of being ashamed of the Cross. The structure of the hypostatic union, in which the Logos is entirely free from suffering in its divine nature but is nonetheless one person with the crucified, human Jesus, is far from being clarified and held firmly at this point in the historical development of Christology. Basil's utterances unwittingly raise the suspicion that the Logos and the man Jesus are separable; we shall see that Gregory errs in the other direction by presenting the unity of Christ in terms of the assimilation of the human nature to the divine.

It is Basil, not I, who substitutes his own thought for that of the Apostles, claims Eunomius. He accuses Basil of imagining that 'the man is emptied into humanity' (τὸν ἄνθρωπον εἰς ἄνθρωπον κεκενῶσθαι); the meaning is that by his obedience he becomes one in form with humanity (σύμμορφον) though he had already assumed human form (3,17). Eunomius insists that it must be the eternal Logos not the human Jesus who empties himself; 'this Jesus whom you crucified' is none other than 'the one who is in the beginning and is God'; thus it is the Logos who is 'made Lord and Christ' (3,21). Basil is at war with himself and does not follow the logic of his own assertions, which oblige him either to say that the Logos is made Lord and Christ or that there are two Lords and Christs (3,22), which would entail ascription of our salvation to a mere man. If one were to argue that it was according to his presence in the flesh that the Son was made Lord and Christ, then one would have to say that before his incarnation he was not Lord. This would mean that he became Lord by advancement (κατὰ προκοπήν), which Eunomius here stoutly denies (3,23).

Gregory on *Acts* 2,36

Gregory's discussion of *Acts* 2,36 is embedded in a refutation of Eunomius's charges (ἐγκλήματα) against Basil (3,26), making it a delicate task to bring out the key theological issues. A key issue is the interpretation of 'made.' Applied to the Logos, in an orthodox sense, it could mean not that he is created but that he has a new role conferred on him, by virtue of the Incarnation; but Basil has insisted that it is the man Jesus and not the Logos who is made Lord and Christ. Gregory could have broken with Basil and said that, yes, in virtue of the communication of idioms the Logos is made Lord and Christ. But that strange locution might play into Arian hands, and it is alien to Gregory's usage: 'he who exists in the beginning uncreated from the Father was not "made" Lord and Christ and Word and God' (3,69); rather the humanity is raised to that status. Though Gregory is a pioneer in his generous use of the communication of idioms in his sermons, in writing against Eunomius he is more inclined to say that 'reason must distinguish what God's love for humankind has united' (III 4,15). In this pre-Chalcedonian context, in any case, Gregory is 'more concerned to show the relation of the two natures than the attribution of the properties of one to the other in virtue of the hypostatic union taken abstractly.'[7]

7 J.-R. Bouchet, "Le vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse", *Revue Thomiste* 68 (1968) 533–582; 579–580.

The most natural reading is that the man Jesus is made Lord and Christ at his resurrection. Eunomius has shown that this will not do, for it would entail that a mere man emptied himself (to become man, absurdly) and underwent the death that saves the human race. So he must have been made Lord and Christ at the very first moment he was made, namely at his conception. This somewhat deflates the words of Peter and Basil's reading of them. Gregory tries to retain as much of the eventfulness of the paschal exaltation as he can, while never forgetting the perfect union of the divine and human from the moment of the conception.

Eunomius, Gregory will complain, 'seizes on the word "made" (*Acts* 2,36, *Heb* 3,1–2) as referring to the pre-temporal existence (ὑπάρξεως)' (4,11), ignoring such usages as 'him who knew no sin he made into sin for our sake' (2 *Cor* 5,21). It is true that Eunomius takes an atomistic approach to scriptural texts, while Basil and Gregory restore these texts to their place in the Economy. But the ontological quarrel with Eunomius nonetheless had a damaging effect on their reading of Scripture, in that it turned texts indicating development of Jesus toward his full messianic status into danger sites with red lights flashing. That these texts affect the status of the human Jesus, not of the eternal Word, is a valid enough response, but this could have been maintained with a much greater openness to what the texts tell of the human Jesus and his ultimate relationship to the eternal Word. When *Acts* 2,36 is taken to mean that 'the visible aspect associated with the form of a slave was, by being assumed, "made" what the one assuming him already was by nature' (III 4,18), the reference of 'assumed' is more to the ontology of the incarnation than to the paschal exaltation; a metaphysically oriented theology cannot fix its gaze long on the paschal events themselves. Gregory shows his metaphysical bias when he pejoratively equates knowing the Christ of the Economy with 'knowing Christ according to the flesh' (2 *Cor* 5,16, quoted, III 4,20).

Addressing the charge that Basil despises the Cross, in that he refuses to let the Logos be identified with 'this Jesus whom you crucified' (for fear of having to admit that the Logos was made Lord and Christ), Gregory asks: 'Will he also accuse us of advocating unlikeness in being (τὸ κατ' οὐσίαν ἀνόμοιον)?' (3,30). This reflects his policy (not an unsound one) of interpreting all utterances of Eunomius in light of his heresy. The Anomoeans make the Father superior to the Son because the shame of the Cross does not apply to him, so it is they who are ashamed of the Cross; they also think that the Cross shows the Son to be of a passible nature (3,30–3). Gregory himself, however, is excessively anxious to protect even the humanity of Jesus from the shame of being passible: 'The body also, in which he accepted the passion, being combined with the divine nature, was by that commingling (ἀνακράσεως) made into that which

the assuming nature is' (3,34). Gregory's asymmetical use of the communication of idioms leads him to stress the divine glory of the Crucified but not that the divine Son suffers.[8] To protect the impassibility of the Logos Gregory does not separate the Word from 'this Jesus whom you crucified' as Basil is suspected of doing, but rather sees the Logos as conferring impassibility on Jesus. This is prepaschal as well; compare Epiphanius: 'a single impassibility results, especially (μάλιστα) after his resurrection from the dead' (*Panarion* [GCS III 190,28–29])—and thus also before it.

Gregory accuses Eunomius of failing to see that the Word's association with suffering is a sign of its power, not of weakness: 'when things go beyond the limits of their nature, more than any they become objects of amazement' (3,34). Compare Origen: 'One must dare to say that the goodness of Christ has shown itself greater and more divine and truly in the image of the Father in that "he humbled himself . . ." (*Phil* 2,8), rather than refuse to become a slave for the salvation of the world' (*ComJn* I 231). Having read so much of the activities of the Logos into *Acts* 2,36, Gregory has moved far from Basil's confinement of that text to the economy. Agreeing with Eunomius that 'this Jesus' cannot be separated from the Word—as no doubt Basil would also, despite his hasty disjunction of theology and economy—, Gregory nonetheless sidesteps the consequence that the Word, being inseparable from 'this Jesus,' is made Lord and Christ. Rather, as we shall see, the Word is identified with the 'God' who made him Lord and Christ.

Gregory next upbraids Eunomius for his groundless charge (a *tu quoque* response to the same charge from Basil) that Basil insults the saints by substituting his own thought for the meaning of the Apostles. Then, returning to *Acts* 2,36, he says: 'there is a single focus of the whole combination of words in the passage, the cross itself, the name of the man and the demonstrative term: the text of Scripture says that two things have been done to a single person (πρόσωπον), the passion by the Jews, the honour by God, not as though there were one who suffered, and another who was honoured by his exaltation' (3,42). This is somewhat of a red herring, in that Eunomius himself neither questioned this identity of the suffering with the exalted Jesus, nor accused Basil of questioning it; the issue is the identity of this Jesus with the Logos.

Gregory now unambiguously locates the 'made Lord and Christ' in the paschal exaltation of Jesus. It is in his human, not his divine nature that Jesus is made Lord and Christ. But at the same time Gregory has to maintain that Jesus

8 See B. Gleede, "Der eine Christus vor, in und nach dem Fleisch—einige Überlegungen zu Gregor von Nyssas *Ad Theophilum Adversus Apollinaristas*", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus, *The Minor Treatises*, 519–540; 535.

from the very first moment is conjoined with the Word, so that the Word, not the humanity, is the agent of miracles, while the humanity, not the Word, is the bearer of weakness and suffering (III 4,8). Note that this distribution of activities among the two natures creates a narrative based on incarnational ontology that cuts athwart any natural reading of the gospel stories.

Unlike Athanasius, Gregory does not whittle down the implications of *Acts* 2,36 by making it mean 'manifested him as Lord and Christ' or 'made his Lordship and Christhood effective for all.' As Andrew Radde-Gallwitz has shown, pro-Nicenes at this stage of the controversy (Ps.-Basil, Ps.-Athanasius, Epiphanius, Amphilochius) were ready to recognize a radical paschal transformation of Christ's humanity. Yet they still allow the events of the paschal mystery to be overshadowed or constricted by being read too heavily in terms of the ontology of incarnation; they eagerly query paschal statements such as *Acts* 2,36 for their yield of insight into this ontology, while in their concern for metaphysical consistency they prematurely iron out significant tensions in the biblical text.

Gregory's Christology includes a linear and dynamic narrative. It would be wrong, though perhaps an element of elusiveness in Gregory's account makes it understandable, to characterize this narrative as moving from a quasi-Nestorian conjunction of the man and the divinity, before the resurrection, to a quasi-Monophysite fusion as the humanity is lost in the divinity as a droplet in the ocean, after the resurrection.[9] The resurrection perfects a process that has been afoot all along, and does not exclude the idea that even in the passion the humanity is so absorbed in the divinity as to become impassible.

Gregory effects a high-christological reinterpretation of *Acts* 2,36 by affirming that the humanity is exalted not only by God but, primarily, by the Word dwelling within it. There is a Johannine basis for this (*Jn* 10,17–18;[10] 17,19), but it undercuts any serious exegesis of *Acts* 2,36 on its own terms. The right hand of God which exalts Jesus is identified with the Word who 'took up the man united with him to its own height, by that combination making him also what by nature it is itself' (3,44). This process whereby the Word divinizes its own humanity is a remarkable swerve away from the drama of *Acts* 2,36 and anticipates the further Origenist swerve, whereby the humanity is so totally fused with divinity that it becomes hard to see what identifying traits of the humanity subsist. Having passed through death, the humanity of Jesus can now become free of corporeality and passion.

9 See Gleede, "Der eine Christus", 529.

10 Cited at *CE* III, 3, 68.

The linear dynamic of the paschal story, so clear when it is the Father who exalts Jesus, is weakened. It becomes an event happening in ontological space, a logical consequence of the ontology of incarnation.[11] Jesus becomes 'in the Immortal, immortal, in the Light, light, in the Indestructible, indestructible, in the Invisible, invisible, in the Christ, Christ, in the Lord, Lord' (3,44). The Messianic titles and functions of Christ are flattened by being identified with his divinity. His exaltation confirms and manifests what was the case all along, his mixture with the Logos. This is one step beyond the idea that the exaltation merely manifests his lordship over creation, but it still reduces the passion and exaltation of Christ (and the eschatological tension toward the fulness of his triumph when he comes in glory) to the mere foreground of a hidden divine action whereby the Logos transforms the fleshly Jesus into itself. The primacy of divinization threatens to give a monophysite and docetic cast to Christological thinking.

The flesh 'because of its commingling with the Good in its immensity and infinity . . . became . . . instead of man, God' (3,46). The humanity is weak and vulnerable before the resurrection gives to it all the divine qualities it lacked. The word 'became' (ἐγένετο) in this sentence refers to the paschal transformation of Christ's human nature rather than to the transformation initially effected by the mingling of that nature with the divine Logos; God became man at the incarnation but the human flesh became fully divinized only at the exaltation. The Incarnation is the foundation and the divinization of Christ's humanity is the consummation built on it, or rather its fully logical and complete expression. Or would it be truer to say that the incarnation is a transitory state, and that when the air-bubble returns to the surface (III 3,67), as it inevitably must, this state is largely undone; the exaltation is largely a disincarnation, as in Origen. The previous stages in the incarnational process are only shadowily chronological. Incarnation is less an event than an ontological reality; the resurrection, in contrast, is an event, but it is an event of divinization, not of incarnation. The Logos assumes flesh only to cause flesh to melt away into the Logos's own mode of being. The apparent drama of a divine rescue of Jesus from the power of death (cf. *Heb* 5,7) turns out to be epiphenomenal.

'This transformation begins . . . with the incarnation itself, but it is manifested above all at the resurrection.'[12] What is uppermost in Gregory's presentation is, however, not a progressive sequence of transformative events from conception to resurrection, but two major points: the resurrection and the

11 As with K. Barth, 'Thus the death on the Cross is but the explication of the Incarnation' (*Erklärung des Philipperbriefs*, Zollikon 1947, 63).

12 B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon saint Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 242.

incarnation in a synchronic sense as the divine-human status of Christ. The latter manifests itself dynamically by the Word's fully divinizing the flesh it bears at the resurrection.

Answering another charge of Eunomius, to the effect that Basil says that 'the man emptied himself into humanity,' Gregory again shows that the accusation boomerangs: 'It is they, not we, whose doctrine makes the Son change by the economy of the passion from like to like' (3,50), since the Arian Son is a creature to begin with. He could have answered: 'When Basil says that *Acts* 2,36 is about the Economy and not about Theology, he is not denying that "this Jesus" is the Logos, but only that his status as Logos is in question in Peter's speech.' Perhaps he refrains from giving this answer, because if 'Lord and Christ' refers to the divinity of the Logos, to which the Logos raises the man Jesus, then Theology is in play after all. Basil may be closer to a biblical sense of things than Gregory here. Gregory is unable to find his way back to a merely or primarily Economical reading of *Acts* 2,36. The more one is forced to reflect on ontological implications, the less one can espouse a normal reading of the biblical narrative of exaltation.

Replying to the charge that Basil teaches 'two Christs and two Lords,' Gregory says: 'We both see the marks of the fleshly dispensation on their own, and we also recognize the divine power by itself,' as indeed, Gregory recognizes, does Eunomius, yet no one accuses him of 'preaching two Words, one who was in the beginning and one who was made flesh' (3,62). Basil is not separating 'this Jesus' and the Word but is merely differentiating the fleshly dispensation and the divine power, as Eunomius himself does. Eunomius would reject Basil's way of distinguishing Word and flesh and would himself allow fleshly weakness to contaminate the divine Word, making it, too, in some sense weak and variable. Gregory's response has the contamination work the other way: the flesh becomes like the Word. Basil's differentiation is valid chiefly for the pre-Paschal Jesus: 'The flesh however is not the same as the godhead until it too is transformed into godhead, so that inevitably some things conform with the divine Logos, others with the form of a slave' (3,62). The things that conform with the form of a slave are all pre-paschal incidents; the exalted, divinized Christ no longer does things that exhibit the weakness of human nature. From Eunomius's point of view, if Basil's disjunction of Word and flesh is too stark at the pre-Paschal level, it disappears too quickly with Christ's exaltation; the Word's involvement in fleshly suffering is not just a temporary disguise of its true nature, which blazes forth unimpeded in the resurrection, but is a sign of its subordinate ontological status, remaining so even after the resurrection.

'The one who was highly exalted after the passion was he who was made Lord and Christ, by his union with him who is essentially Lord and Christ'

(3,63). When does this union occur? Probably at the incarnation, to which Peter's words refer back, rather than in the exaltation. To be made Lord and Christ is not merely the exaltation of the crucified but the revelation of his divine identity: he is 'made' divine by the incarnation, wherein the Word, conversely, is made man: 'the blessed Peter was making brief, passing reference to the mystery of the incarnation when he said . . . that what was crucified in weakness, because of the dominance of the power dwelling in him, was itself also made (γέγονεν) into that which the one indwelling him both is, and is called, and is itself called Christ and Lord' (3,69). The chronological ambiguity here reflects the continuing tension between incarnational ontology and linear paschal narrative.

'The meaning (θεωρία) of the characteristics (ἰδιωμάτων) of the flesh and of the godhead remains unconfused (ἀσύγχυτος), as long as each of these is considered by itself' (3,63). This refers to the exalted Christ, but when Gregory goes on to give examples of the flesh considered by itself they are all pre-paschal: the human Jesus weeps, the divine Jesus raises Lazarus, etc. (3,65). But 'by the bond and conjunction both belong to each' so that the crucified can be called the Lord of Glory (*1 Cor* 2,9, quoted by Eunomius) (3,66). Here the general account of the union of the natures also grounds the exaltation of Christ (*Phil* 2,10) and the linear narrative drops from view. The fundamental event in Gregory's Christology is ontological: 'by mingling with the divine, the moral nature is renewed to match the dominant element . . . the drop of vinegar mingled with the ocean is made into sea by the mixing' (3,68); this happens 'after the passion' when 'the true Life contained in the flesh flows back up to its own self' (3,67), but really it has happened in principle from the very first moment of the conjunction of Word and flesh.

Yet as Gregory responds to Eunomius, we may discern something of the tension and mobility of his own struggle with *Acts* 2,36. He has not pinned down its meaning in a completely settled way. The pressure of metaphyical theology is toward envisioning the text in terms of a cut-and-dried ontology of the two natures. But he resists this by emphasizing the dramatic paschal transformation whereby the human is absorbed into the divine, and by attempting to give narrative body to the interplay of the two natures by suggesting how the process of incarnation and divinization is an ongoing one across the life of Christ, in which now one nature, now the other comes to the fore. The element of unsteadiness in this performance makes it all the more eloquent as an instance of Christian thought seeking to keep the dynamism of biblical narrative alive over against the narrowing constraints of metaphysical logic.

Conclusion

Many of the strained aspects of Gregory's Christology are due to the lack of the notion of hypostatic union formulated at Chalcedon. His image of the unity of Christ is based on the assimilation of the human nature to the divine, in a way that tends to Monophysitism, and on the other hand, his argument that Jesus does some things as man, others as God, could invite the charge of dividing the Christ. But even the firmer perspective established at Chalcedon would not be sufficient to close the gap between the metaphysical story that prevails in Gregory and the texture of the original biblical narratives. The strain under which classical metaphysical Christologies are placed in our present world, with its consciousness of evolution and historicity, no doubt requires that we move to a new paradigm, in which the events of Jesus' human destiny are taken more seriously as the historical locus and medium of his ultimate ontological status as 'Logos made flesh'—itself cashed in phenomenological terms as the eschatological and revelatory inbreaking of the divine into history. The unresolved tensions in New Testament Christology could be taken up as a clue to this subtler and more open Christology, rather than being smoothed away as classical metaphysical Christology attempted.

In reading 4th century Christological discourse we need to map the avenues cut off or insufficiently explored, helped by the greater openness of Origen in the 3rd century and of Chalcedon in the 5th, as well as by modern historical and event-centred approaches to that Jesus whom God made both Lord and Christ. We need to rethink what classical Christology indicates in a shorthand that sketches correctly but inadequately the human and divine dimensions of the meaning of Christ. The effort, in close attention to the sinuous movement of his arguments, to identify precisely and to overcome the metaphysical blind spots that obstruct Gregory's Christological vision fulfils a theological responsibility of patristic scholarship, guided by the insights of systematic and hermeneutical theology. Just as science advances more by falsification than by its positive findings, so clear insight into the limits of an ancient theological effort, and the reason for those limits, can secure solid bearings for the advance of theological understanding.

Die stoische Gattung des πρός τί πως ἔχον in *CE* III 1,131–134 (GNO II 48,1–24) des Gregors von Nyssa

Georgios D. Panagopoulos

Einführende Bemerkung

In dem zu behandelnden Text aus *CE* III 1,131–134 (GNO II 48,1–24) setzt sich der heilige Gregor von Nyssa mit seinem Gegner Eunomios von Kysikos auseinander, der die semantische Funktion des Namens *Sohn* dahin gehend interpretieren wollte, dass die zweite göttliche *Hypostase*, der Logos Gottes, als ein dem ersten Gott gegenüber wesensungleiches und aus dem Nichts geschaffenes Wesen erscheint.

Gregor legt hierbei eine zweifache Gliederung der göttlichen Namen dar, die eine Relation, bzw. Beziehung zu etwas anderem (πρός τι Namen) zum Ausdruck bringen. Namen solcher Art lassen sich in zwei Klassen einteilen: Es gibt einerseits diejenigen, die die Vielfalt des Vorsehungswirkens Gottes den Menschen gegenüber anzeigen; andererseits gibt es die, welche auf die Höhe und unaussprechliche göttliche Glorie hinweisen. Als Beispiel der ersten Klasse führt Gregor die Bezeichnungen *Weinstock*, *Hirt* und *Arzt* an, die, nach einer irrealen Hypothese, von Gott nicht ausgesagt werden würden, wären die Menschen nicht des entsprechenden wohltätigen Wirkens Gottes bedürftig. Als Beispiel der zweiten Klasse finden die Namen *Sohn, Rechte Hand, Eingeborener Logos, Weisheit und Kraft des Vaters* Erwähnung; sie bringen das Gott Geziemliche zum Ausdruck und werden nach einer beziehungsmäßigen Konjunktion mit dem Vater ausgesprochen; ausgerechnet diese Namen werden Gott auch ohne die das heilsökonomische Wirken empfangenden Menschen wirklich und im eigentlichen Sinn angewandt.[1]

Die der Stelle zugrunde liegende Unterscheidung zwischen zwei Arten von eine Relation ausdrückenden Namen (πρός τι) wird uns im Folgenden beschäftigen. Am Rande sei angemerkt, dass wir uns hauptsächlich auf die Namen *Vater-Sohn* beschränken werden.

1 *CE* III 1,131–134 (GNO II 48,3–24).

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Die schulphilosophische Tradition hinsichtlich der Relation-Gattung und deren gregorianische Rezeption

a) *Stoisches Gedankengut und Gregors von Nyssa theologisches Anliegen*

Die erste Definition der πρός τι Namen stellt Aristoteles in seinen berühmten *Kategorien* dar. In *Cat* 6a 36–37 heißt es: „Als πρός τι werden all diejenigen Dinge bezeichnet, die, so wie sie sind, von anderen Dingen, oder in einer gewissen Beziehung zu etwas anderem gesagt werden". Im selben Zusammenhang widmet der griechische Philosoph seine Aufmerksamkeit der Einsicht, dass es einige πρός τι gibt, die der Natur nach zusammen sind (*Cat. 7b*). Es sei angemerkt, dass unser Philosoph von πρός τι Dingen spricht; im Gegensatz zu ihm, vermischt sich bei den Stoikern die ontologische mit der semantisch-logischen Betrachtungsweise der *Relation*, während die von den Stoikern beeinflussten alexandrinischen Grammatiker sich für die πρός τι als Namen interessieren.

Das relationale Sich-Verhalten (πρός τί πως ἔχον) des Vaters zum Sohn hatte Aristoteles in seiner Kategorienschrift nicht unter den diesbezüglichen Beispielen angeführt; später aber zählte er diese Dinge zu der zweiten von den drei Klassen von πρός τι, die er in *Met* 1020b aufgestellt hatte,[2] d. h. betrachtete er die Beziehung des Vaters zum Sohn aus dem Blickwinkel des metaphysischen Paares *Wirkend-Passiv*, und wendete dabei den Terminus ποιεῖν an, um die Wirkung des Vaters auf den Sohn zu kennzeichnen.[3]

Daran, dass dies auf den Bischof von Nyssa nur abstoßend wirken konnte, dürfte man kaum Zweifel hegen: Die vor aller Ewigkeit unaussprechliche Zeugung des Sohnes vom Vater ist nach Gregors Verständnis kein schöpferisches Wirken (ποίησις).[4] Zwischen den ewigen Hypostasen des Vaters und

2 M. E. Reesor, „The Stoic Categories", *American Journal of Philology* 78 (1957) 63–82, hier 76 mit Anm. 35. Vgl. auch Alexander von Aphrodisias, *In Met.* (CAG I 406 Hayduck).

3 Seitdem stellen diese Namen zusammen mit *Rechtseitigen* (und manchmal *Sklave-Herr*) die *termini technici* der eine Relation bezeichnenden Namen, wie man sich auch bei einer flüchtigen Übersicht von diesbezüglichen Aussagen von Dionysios Thrax (*Ars Grammatica*, I 1,35) überzeugen kann; vgl. auch Heliodoros (8. Jh.), *Scholia*, (387,7–12 Hilgard und 388,1–4). Im 4. Jh. dürfte das einschlägige Gedankengut fester Bestandteil der philosophischen Schullehre gewesen sein, was nicht zuletzt auch Gregor von Nyssa bezeugt (*CE* I 568 [GNO I 190,16–9 Jaeger]).

4 *CE* III 2,105–106 (GNO II 87,11– 20). Auch David G. Robertson, „Relatives in Basil of Caesarea", *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001) 277–288, hier 280, neigt dazu, einen eventuellen aristotelischen Einfluss auf die Lehre Basileios' des Grossen hinsichtlich der Relationsnamen als unwahrscheinlich zu halten. Anders sieht die Sache Volker H. Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea*, Göttingen 1996, 65 mit Anm. 56. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea*

des Sohnes darf keine *diastematische* Größe—nicht einmal der ewige Wille des Vaters—eingeschoben werden[5]. Der Sohn hat seine Existenz unmittelbar (προσεχῶς) vom Vater der Zeugung nach (γεννητῶς).[6] Man fühlt sich berechtigt zu behaupten, dass es nach Gregor von Nyssa kein Subjekt des Wirkens und des Empfangens des Wirkens innerhalb der Heiligen Trinität gibt. Sowohl das Vater-Sein für die erste *Hypostase*, als auch das vom Vater-Gezeugt-Sein für die zweite stellen charakteristische Merkmale dar, deren jeder nur je einer *Hypostase* eigen ist und auf die unmitteilbare Existenzweise je einer *Hypostase* hinweist. Nur anhand der hypostatischen Idiome unterscheiden sich die drei göttlichen Hypostasen voneinander; in jeder anderen Hinsicht sind sie dank ihrer Wirkungs- und Wesensgleichheit ein und dasselbe.[7]

Wenn aber das aristotelische Verständnis der relationalen Bedeutung der Namen *Vater-Sohn* sich als völlig ungeeignet für Gregors Anliegen erweist, so sieht die Lage im Falle des entsprechenden stoischen Verständnisses ziemlich anders aus. Schon Chrysipp, der eigentliche spiritus rector der Bewegung, hatte, nach dem Zeugnis des Römers Varo,[8] darauf hingewiesen, dass es Namen gibt, die „*alterum ex altero videtur, . . . quem admodum pater ex filio et filius ex pater*". Dass eine solche Auffassung dem christlichen Theologen die Möglichkeit eröffnet, die Beziehung zwischen Vater und Sohn auf eine Art und Weise darzustellen, die deren Wesensgleichheit keinen Abbruch tut, liegt auf der Hand. Aber der Boden für solch ein Unternehmen wird für Gregor erst auf der Grundlage gewonnen, die die stoische Lehre über die πρός τι Gattung bildet, wie sie in einem für unsere Analyse bedeutungsschweren Quellenzeugnis, das von dem Aristoteles-Kommentator Simplikius (6. Jh.) überliefert wird.[9]

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and its Legacy. An approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology, Oxford 2006, 201–202, sieht die diesbezügliche Lehre Basileios' in die neuplatonisch-aristotelische Tradition eingebettet.

5 Siehe u.a. *CE* II 214 (GNO I 287,24–29); *CE* III 1,78 (GNO II 31,16–21); *CE* III 2,118 auch III 6,18,39 (GNO II 91,10–19 und 192,13–17 und 200,1–3); Besonders wichtig erweist sich die Aussage, dergemäß nicht einmal ein vermeintlicher Zeugenswille den gezeugten Sohn vom zeugenden Vater trennt: *CE* III 6,15 (GNO II 191,18–20); vgl. *Graec.* (GNO III/1 25,8–12).

6 *CE* I 378 (GNO II 138,6–7).

7 Vgl. G. D. Panagopoulos, „Die Vermittlung des Sohnes beim ewigen Ausgang des Heiligen Geistes aus dem Vater nach *Ad Ablabium* Gregors von Nyssa", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (ed.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen 17–20 September 2008)*, SVigChr 106, Leiden 2011, 383–397.

8 *De Lingua latina* X 59 (SVF II 155).

9 *In Arist. Categor.*, CAG VIII 165,32–167,29 (SVF II 403). Simplikius' Kommentare zu *Cat.* und *Phys.* stellen einen reichen Befund älterer Quellen dar. C. Luna, „La Relation chez Simplicius",

Diesem Text gemäß, dessen Glaubwürdigkeit früher M. Pohlenz bestritt,[10] teilten die Stoiker (welche genau wird nicht gesagt) die 4. Gattung des „relationalen Sich-Verhaltens" (πρός τί πως ἔχον) in zwei Arten ein, die πρός τι (Namen, die eine Relation ausdrücken) und die πρός τί πως ἔχοντα (Namen, die ein relationales Sich-Verhalten zum Ausdruck bringen): Anders gesagt: Die 4. Gattung betrifft die πρός τι; aber es sind nicht alle πρός τι auch πρός τί πως ἔχοντα. Wie unterscheidet man zwischen beiden Fällen? Obwohl der Quellenbeleg von Simplikius wegen des Sprachstils sehr kompliziert erscheint, ist Folgendes klar:[11] Relative Namen (πρός τι), wie *süß* und *bitter*, gelten als „gemäß einem Unterschied" (bzw. einer qualitativen Differenz) konzipiert; darum werden sie den so genannten *an sich*, bzw. *absolut* ausgesprochenen Namen, wie *weiß* und *schwarz*, entgegengesetzt. Πρός τι Namen wie *süß* und *bitter* werden wegen ihrer inneren qualitative Differenz von einem *eidos*, d. h. durch eine κοινὴ ποιότης (2. stoische Gattung), bzw. einen wesentlichen Unterschied gekennzeichnet (wir nehmen hierin auf ein anderes Zeugnis von Simplikius Bezug),[12] obwohl sie keine an sich Bestehenden, sondern nur „gemäß einer Relation zu anderem" (πρός τι κατὰ διαφορὰν aber kein καθ' ἑαυτά) sind. Denn sie wirken wegen der ihnen eigenen *poiotes* (ποιότης)—die, nach stoischer Auffassung, eine bestimmte Dynamis (Wirken) hat—auf denjenigen, der sie schmeckt, und so neigen sie zu ihm hin, anders gesagt, sie stehen in einer Relation zu ihm; darum werden sie Relative (πρός τι) genannt. Darum aber, weil süß und bitter durch eine ihnen inhärente Differenz charakterisiert werden, untergehen sie einen Wandel, nur wenn ihre innere Differenz im Wandel begriffen ist.

Im Gegensatz nun zu πρός τι werden die πρός τί πως ἔχοντα, wie *Vater* und *Rechtsseitiger*, den „gemäß einer Differenz" konzipierten Namen entgegengesetzt. Kurz und gut: Namen wie *Vater* und *Rechtseitiger* gehören nicht zu den „gemäß einem Unterschied" (κατὰ διαφοράν) konzipierten Namen. Sie lassen

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in: I. Hadot (ed.), *Simplicius, sa vie, son œuvre, sa survie. Actes du colloque international de Paris 28 Sept.–1er Oct. 1985*, Peripatoi 15, Berlin 1987, 113–147, hier 113–114.

10 M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*, Bd. I, Göttingen 1992[7] (1948), 69–68. Vgl. allerdings auch A. A. Long – D. Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers.* I, *Translations of the Principal Sources with Philosophical Commentary*, Cambridge 1987, 178.

11 Zum richtigen Verständnis des heiklen Textes haben sich mir folgende Beiträge als besonders hilfsreich erwiesen: auch J. Brunschwig, „Stoic Metaphysics", in: B. Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, Cambridge 2003, 206–232, 231–232; S. Menn, „The Stoic Theory of Categories", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 17 (1999), 215–247, hier besonders 231ff. Siehe auch M. Mignucci, „The Stoic Notion of Relatives", in: J. Barnes – M. Mignucci (ed.), *Matter and Metaphysics. Fourth Symposium Hellenisticum*, Napoli 1988, 129–221.

12 SVF II 378.

sich nur in einem bleibenden wechselseitigen Verhältnis zusammen betrachten („weil sie nur von der Beziehung zu dem anderen abhängig sind").[13] Das heißt darüber hinaus, dass die durch Namen solcherart bezeichnenden Dinge sich bloß durch eine äußerliche Wandlung verändern lassen: So hört der Vater auf, Vater zu sein, auch ohne dass ihm eine Veränderung widerfährt, sobald sein Sohn stirbt; ähnlich hört der *Rechtseitiger* auf der rechten Seite zu stehen auf, sobald der links Stehende beseitigt wird.[14] Es handelt sich hierbei um den im englischsprachigen Raum so genannte *Cambridge Change*,[15] die dem Sinn nach auf den platonischen *Theätetos* zurückgeht (154B–155D) und auch bei Aristoteles (*Phys.* 200b33–201a9; 225b11–13) Verwendung fand.[16] Übrigens bedeutet das weiterhin, dass „der Sohn und der Rechte jemandes von außen bedürfen, um Existenz zu haben" (ἔξωθέν τινων προσδέονται πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν) und dass sie „nur in der Relation das Sein (d.h. die Existenz) haben und nicht in einer wesentlichen Differenz (ἐν τῇ σχέσει μόνη τῷ εἶναι ἔχει καὶ οὐ κατὰ διαφοράν)".[17]

Dass solch eine allgemeine Äußerung bald als erklärungs- bzw. korrekturbedürftig erschien, zeigt sich nicht zuletzt daran, dass, so Simplikius, der Stoiker des 2. Jh. n. Chr. Boethos sich dazu bemüßigt fühlte, den Nachweis dafür zu führen, dass ein Kennzeichen den sich aufeinander beziehenden Dingen (πρός τί πως ἔχοντα) auch im Fall des relationalen Sich-Verhaltens inhärent sein muss (ὅτι δὲ καὶ τοῖς πρός τί πως ἔχουσιν ανάγκη χαρακτῆρα ἐνυπάρχειν τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις, ἱκανῶς ὁ Βόηθος ἀπέδειξεν).[18]

Ausgerechnet an diese Begebenheiten knüpft unsere Analyse der πρός τι Namen in Gregor von Nyssas *CE* III 1,131–134 (GNO II 48,1–24) an. Gregors Gegner, Eunomios, hatte alles daran gesetzt, die völlige Ungleichheit des Wesens Gottes des Vaters und dem seines Sohnes, und konsequenterweise auch des Heiligen Geistes zu beweisen, und darüber hinaus sein metaphysisches System von drei ungleichen, hierarchisch geordneten göttlichen Wesen, von denen er nur das erste, das als „oberstes und alles herrschende Ousia"[19] benennt, zu untermauern. Zu diesem Zweck diente ihm, wie bekannt, der

13 SVF II 403; 132,39.

14 Vgl. auch Alexandros von Aphrodisias, *In De Sensu* (CAG III.1 127,13–14 und 132,8 Wendland); Dexippos, *In Arist. Cat.* (CAG IV.2 60,17–18 Busse): μηδεμιᾶς ἐν αὐτοῖς διαφορᾶς γενομένης; Themistios, *In Arist. Phys. Paraphr.* (CAG V.2 75,9 Schenkl).

15 R. Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200–600 AD*, vol. *3: Logic and Metaphysics*, London 2004, 80.

16 Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, 81.

17 SVF II 403 (133,3 und 8–9); vgl. auch Ammonios, *In Cat.* (CAG IV.4 77 Busse)

18 *In Arist. Cat.* (CAG VIII, 167 Kalbfleisch).

19 *CE* I 151 (GNO I 72,1–2 Jaeger).

Terminus ungezeugt—Ungezeugt-Sein (ἀγέννητος / ἀγεννησία) als Hauptwaffe: Er sah in dem Ungezeugt-Sein das wesentliche Merkmal des ersten und obersten Wesens (οὐσία), ja er setzte sogar das Ungezeugt-Sein mit der οὐσία Gottes gleich. Die Konsequenz, die er daraus leicht zog, liegt auf der Hand: da der Sohn (die eunomianische zweite οὐσία) vom Vater gezeugt und geschaffen wurde, muss man ihm die nikänische Wesensgleichheit mit dem Vater (ὁμοούσιον) ohne weiteres absprechen.

In der zur Debatte stehenden Passage will Gregor von Nyssa im Grunde genommen zweierlei beweisen: Der Sohn ist kein Geschöpf, nicht einmal das erste und edelste, sondern der von Ewigkeit her vom Vater gezeugte und im Vater existierende Logos, der wesensgleich mit Gott dem Vater ist. Gregor stellt klar, dass die von der Heiligen Schrift dem „eingeborenen Sohn" zugesprochenen Namen nicht eine und dieselbe semantische Funktion aufweisen. In *CE* I 560[20] schreibt unser Bischof, dass „Eunomios sich die totale Veränderung der gewöhnlichen Namensbedeutung (ἡ συνήθης τῶν ὀνομάτων ἔμφασις) vornahm …", um zu zeigen, dass der Name *Vater* nicht beziehungsmäßig auf *Sohn* hinweist. Diesbezüglich geht Gregor, in deutlichem Gegensatz zu Eunomios, immer davon aus, dass man auf den gewöhnlichen Gebrauch und die Bedeutung der Wörter, bzw. Namen Rücksicht nehmen sollte, solange die kirchliche Tradition und die lebendige Erfahrung des kirchlichen Lebens deren Modifizierung nicht notwendig macht. Gregor will z. B. die Namen γέννησις, πατήρ, υἱός, u.ä. von jeglicher auf das fleischliche Zeugungsverfahren der geschaffenen Natur verweisenden Konnotation freimachen,[21] damit er sie auf Gott anwendend nur die Wesensgleichheit und die von Ewigkeit her existierende Hypostase des Sohnes von und in Gott dem Vater unzweifelhaft macht. In diesem Versuch geht er offensichtlich von den unerschütterlichen Basisprinzipien aus, die ihm die Heilige Schrift und das Leben der Kirche diktieren, wobei hier hauptsächlich das Taufbekenntnis zu dem Dreieinigen Gott dem Retter, sowie die Tauferfahrung einen hervorragenden Platz einnehmen, die für Gregor, wie für seinen Bruder Basileios den Großen, das Geheimnis der Gotteserkenntnis darstellt.[22] Sobald aber das Zeugnis der Tradition nicht im Wege steht, scheut unser Bischof sich nicht vor der Anwendung von logisch-

20 GNO I 188,13–18.

21 Vgl. GNO II 31,18–20; 197,6–24 und 198,1–200,1–3. Dasselbe Bestreben begegnet uns auch bei anderen pro-nicänischen Theologen: Vgl. z. B. Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 29 2.4 (SC 250 180–184 Gallay); Basileios dem Großen, *Adversus Eunomium* II 22 (SC 305 90–92 Sesboüé).

22 Siehe u. a. *Maced* (GNO III/1 105,19–30 und 106,9–11 Mueller); *Epist.* V 5–9 (GNO VIII/2 32,15–34,3); vgl. Basileios der Große, *De Spiritu Sancto* XV 35 (SC 17bis, 368).

philosophischen Konstruktionen, die allerdings auf die gemeine und gewöhnliche Bedeutung der Namen im alltäglichen Leben Rücksicht nehmen sollen. Die Theologie Gregors erweist sich, trotz ihrer bestrickenden philosophischen Prägung, als hauptsächlich biblisch und realistisch, in dem Sinne, dass sie die verschiedenartigen theologischen Probleme im Licht des erfahrenen neuen Lebens in Christo behandelt, ohne sich dabei über die Begebenheiten unserer realen Lebenswelt hinwegzusetzen.

Was die spezifische semantische Funktion der Namen *Vater* und *Sohn* betrifft, so greift Gregor auf die in der hellenistischen philosophischen und grammatischen Tradition erarbeitete Lehre über die relationalen Begriffe, bzw. Namen auf. Dementsprechend erklärt Gregor, dass es zweierlei göttliche Namen gibt: A) Zunächst einmal gibt es diejenigen, die auf die hohe und unaussprechliche Glorie Gottes hindeuten, wie *Sohn, Rechte* (Hand des Vaters), *Eingeborener Logos, Weisheit* und *Dynamis* (Kraft-Wirken) und ähnliche, die in Relation zu etwas (πρός τι) ausgesprochen werden. Werden diese Namen vom Logos ausgesagt, dann wird er „gemäß einer beziehungsmäßigen Konjunktion" zusammen mit dem *Vater* benannt (ὅσα πρός τι λέγεται, καθάπερ ἐν συζυγίᾳ τινί σχετικῇ τῷ πατρὶ πάντος συνονομαζόμενος λέγεται).[23] Dabei steht Gregor als christlicher Autor natürlicherweise nicht allein: Schon Klemens von Alexandrien wusste die Namen *Vater* und *Sohn* als relationale Namen, bzw. Begriffe zu brauchen.[24] Allerdings fehlen die diesbezüglichen *Termini technici*, was auch bei anderen christlichen Autoren des 3. Jh. der Fall ist.[25] Der „argument from correlatives" (M. DelCogliano) kam auch dem Anliegen von Origenes, die ewige Vaterschaft Gottes zu untermauern, durchaus zugute;[26] da dem Alexandriner darüber hinaus aber daran gelegen war, die Ko-Ewigkeit nicht nur des Sohnes, sondern auch der erschaffenen Welt mit Gott außer allen Zweifel zu setzen, verschmolz bei ihm das Namenspaar *Vater-Sohn* allzu leicht

23 *CE* III 1,133–134 (GNO II 48,20–22). Vgl. auch *Or. cat.* (GNO III/4 10,26–27,1–6 Mühlenberg); *Deit. fil.* (GNO X/2 123,22–124,1–4 Rhein).

24 *Stromata* V 1,1 (GCS II 326,9–11 Stählin)· vgl. auch *Strom.* IV 8,67 (GCS II 278,29–31 Stählin), wo das Begriffspaar πατὴρ-υἱὸς parallel zu dem von *δεσπότης-οἰκέτης* erscheint, allerdings in einem nicht philosophischen Kontext. Auch im Westen griffen die christlichen Schriftsteller zur gleichen Argumentation. Siehe u. a. Tertullianus, *Adv. Prax.* 2; Lactantius, *De divinis institutionibus* IV 29; Ambrosius von Mailand, *De fide* VIII (PL 16 541).

25 M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Cesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, SvigChr 103, Leiden 2010, 228.

26 *Princ.* I 2 (GCS V 31,2–34,3 Koetschau); *Princ.* I 4, 3 (GCS V 67,8–15 Koetschau). Vgl. R. E. Heine, *Origen. Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Oxford 2010, 96–101.

mit dem *Herr-Sklave*.[27] Zu Beginn des 4. Jh. argumentiert auch Alexandros von Alexandrien, erregt von der arianischen Lehre über die vermeintlichen ontologischen Subordination des Sohnes unter dem Vater, für die Ewigkeit des Sohnes mit dem Vater, indem er auf die semantische Funktion des Terminus *Vater* verweist: Die Vollkommenheit des Vaters wird *Vater* benannt des Sohnes wegen.[28] Auch Athanasios der Grosse lässt seiner Argumentation die semantische Funktion der *pros ti* Namen zunutze kommen; es tauchen aber auch bei ihm die diesbezüglichen *Termini technici* kaum auf. Trotzdem gelangt er, indem er die ältere Argumentation von Origenes umformulierte, zu einer klaren Unterscheidung zwischen der Korrelation von Vater und Sohn einerseits und derjenigen zwischen dem Hersteller und dem hergestellten Ding (ἀγένητον-γενητόν) andererseits.[29] Die semantische Funktion von *Vater–Sohn* kommt besonders bei den Kappadoziern, Gregor von Nazianz und Basileios von Caesarea des öfters vor.[30] An dieser Stelle sei zu beachten, dass das Verständnis der relationalen Begriffe (hier *Vater-Sohn*) bei älteren christlichen Autoren als nicht besonders durchdacht erscheint. Jedenfalls lässt sich eine philosophisch ausdifferenzierte Verwendung der πρός τι Namen kaum feststellen. Dies aber ist gerade bei Gregor von Nyssa der Fall, insofern er die kurz behandelten *pros ti* Namen von denjenigen unterscheidet, auf die nun eingegangen wird.

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27 Vgl. jedoch P. Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius*, OTM, Oxford 2004, 75–76.

28 *Epist. an Alexander von Byzantium*, 26; vgl. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 44; auch DelCogliano, *Basil of Cesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 230–231, der die alexandrinischen christlichen Autoren der aristotelischen Tradition zurechnet, die ihm zufolge auf das „ontological entailment" (d.h. die *pros ti* sind korrelativ und von Natur aus gleichzeitig) besonders Wert legte. Dem widersprach Arius heftig, der, so Del Cogliano, *Basil of Cesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 233, die mit Hilfe des Gebrauchs vom Namenpaar *Vater-Sohn* als korrelativ strukturierte alexandrinische Argumentation zurückwies, wobei er das beredteste Zeugnis von Kenntnis der aristotelischen technischen Terminologie ablegte. (Vgl. Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 143–144). Allerdings würde ich an der bereits erwähnten These DelColianos bezüglich der christlichen Alexandriner Zweifel hegen; denn die dafür herangezogenen Belege reichen m. E. nicht aus, um die Anknüpfung dieser Autoren an die aristotelische Tradition plausibel zu machen, geschweige denn nachzuweisen: Die Anwendung des Namenspaars *Vater—Sohn* als korrelativ weist kaum über die im Schulwesen der Zeit geläufige Lehre der alten Grammatiker hinaus—nun ziehe ich in diesem Fall vor, das Rasier von Ockham walten zu lassen.

29 *Contra Arian*. I 30–34 (PG 26, 80–84); Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 165–169.

30 Siehe inter alia *Oratio* 29 16, (SC 250, 210 Gallay). *Oratio* 30 8 (SC 250, 240 Gallay). Auf Basileios werden wir wenig später zurückkommen.

B) Es geht nun um die Namen, welche die Vielfältigkeit der heilsökonomischen Vorsehung Gottes hinsichtlich der Welt, wie *Weinstock, Hirt, Arzt* u. ä., zum Ausdruck bringen (*CE* III 1,133 [GNO II 48,12–14]). Zu diesen Bezeichnungen könnten wir auch die in *CE* III 8,32[31] angeführten hinzufügen, worin Gregor am klarsten das grundlegende christliche Verständnis der göttlichen Namen zum Ausdruck bringt, nämlich, dass Gott über jeglicher Benennung steht und er sich nur wegen seiner heilsökonomischen Herablassung zu den Menschen benennen lässt.[32]

Von grundlegender Bedeutung für unser Thema ist die folgende Aussage Gregors: „denn die … *pros ti* Namen weisen eine Verwandtschaft nicht zu dem Fremdartigen und ihnen Unangemessenen auf; vielmehr, auch wenn der Name, auf den sich der andere bezieht, verschwiegen wird, trotzdem wird das Verschwiegene zusammen mit seinem Vorbild mitgehört (συνυπακούεται)".[33] Alle *pros ti* Namen lassen, wenn sie ausgesprochen werden, einen Zuhörer auch den Namen verstehen, zu dem sie in Korrelation stehen. Aus diesem Grund ist es unzulässig, dass man den Namen *Schöpfer*, der die Beziehung zu dem ihm andersartigen Geschöpf bezeichnet, mit dem Namen *Sohn* verbindet, der eine naturgemäße Verbindung mit dem ihm wesengleichen Vater anzeigt. Dasselbe gilt auch für die anderen πρός τι, wie *Sklave*, und *Freund*. Dass diese Textstelle mit der bereits angeführten aus *CE* III 1,131–134 zu vergleichen ist, und nur im Licht der stoischen Unterscheidung zwischen Relationsnamen (πρός τι) und denen, die ein relationales Sichverhalten ausdrücken (πρός τί πως ἔχοντα) verständlich wird, versuchen wir in der Folge ans Licht zu bringen.

Nun würden die Namen, welche das wohltätige Wirken Gottes auf die Menschen anzeigen, nicht auf Gott angewandt werden, falls die die göttlichen Wohltaten empfangenden Menschen nicht existierten. Gott und Mensch sind nicht wesensgleich; zwischen dem unerschaffenen Dreieinigen Gott und der geschaffenen Natur gibt es eine ontologisch unüberbrückbare wesentliche Differenz. So könnte man *cum grano salis* sagen, Gott verhält sich zum Menschen (d. h. zu dem Ihm wesensungleichen Geschöpf) wie die „gemäß einer Differenz" konzipierten πρός τι zu einem anderen.[34] Hierbei erinnern wir uns an das Süße, das in Beziehung zu dem es schmeckenden Menschen ein πρός τι ist und zugleich von einem *Eidos*, bzw. gemeinsamer wesentlichen Qualität (ποιότης, 2. stoische Gattung) charakterisiert wird: Das Wirken des Süßen bleibt unversehrt, auch wenn der Mensch es nicht schmeckt. Wenn wir

31 GNO II 242,11–16.

32 Vgl. *CE* II 419–420 (GNO I 348,22–349,11).

33 (Von mir übersetzt) *CE* III.2 107 (GNO II 87,24–88,15).

34 *Cum grano salis*, weil Gott keine wesentliche Differenz zukommt.

zusätzlich die Textstelle aus *CE* III 4,13 zur tieferen Erhellung des kurz vorher Gesagten heranziehen, dann kann als gesichert gelten, dass Gregor die oben genannten πρός τι, die zusätzlich „gemäß einer Differenz" konzipiert und nach einem εἶδος (wesentlichen Unterschied, bzw. κοινή ποιότης) charakterisiert worden sind, hier nicht zuletzt im stoischen Sinn verwendet. So schreibt er: „. . . die Natur konstruiert durch die Leiber diese verschiedenen Arten der Tiere; denn die qualitative Wandlung (ποιὰ τροπή = 2. stoische Gattung) des Leibes wurde auf solche Weise von der Natur disponiert (τοιῶσδε διατεθεῖσα = 3. Gattung, in einem Wortlaut, das direkt an das „τοιῶσδε διατίθησι" des Simplikius erinnert), dass sie (sc. die Natur) „dieses Das" der Tierart schuf (τόδε τι τὸ εἶδος ἐδημιούργησεν τοῦ ζώου)".[35]

So lassen sich die πρός τι Namen, die von Gott im Rahmen seines heilsökonomischen Wirkens zur Welt ausgesprochen werden, der stoischen Unterart der (bloß) πρός τι zuordnen. Eine eventuelle Wandlung bezüglich der Menschen (wenn die Menschheit z.B. nicht das verlorene Schaf wäre) hätte der Anwendung der oben genannten πρός τι Namen auf Gott ein Ende gesetzt (GNO II 48,5–7); und dies würde geschehen, ohne dass das von diesen Namen angedeutete Wirken Gottes ins Nichts geraten wäre. Denn im Fall von Namen, wie *Hirt, Arzt, Mächtige* u. ä. werden göttliche Eigenschaften zum Ausdruck gebracht, die uns nicht im geringsten die Natur-Ousia Gottes offenbaren[36]; eher handelt es sich hierbei um die um Gott betrachteten (τὰ περὶ τὸν Θεὸν θεωρούμενα, bzw. νοούμενα) und unter bestimmten Umständen sogar vom Menschen angeschauten Eigenschaften,[37] die ewig und immerwährend gleich sind,[38] obwohl sie nicht identisch mit der göttlichen Ousia sind.[39]

Nun unterliegt es m. E. keinem Zweifel, dass Gregor hierbei dadurch hellenistisches philosophisches Gedankengut mit einem Stück echter kappadozischer, bzw. kirchlicher Theologie kreativ verbindet, dass er einerseits die πρός τί πως ἔχοντα Namen der stoischen Lehre (im logisch-semantischen Sinne *von Cambridge change*) mit den theologischen Termini, die auf die so genannte theologische, bzw. immanente Trinität hindeuten und andererseits die *pros ti*

35 (Von mir übersetzt) *CE* III/VI 31 (GNO II 197,2–6).

36 Vgl. *CE* II 101–103. 106 (GNO I 256,15–250. 257,14–25); *CE* III/X 48 (GNO II 308,17–20); *CE* III/VIII 10–11 (GNO II 242,10–18); *Beat.* (GNO VII/II 140,15–26); *Cant.* I (GNO VI 36,16–37,7); *Eccl.* VII (GNO V 406,7–16); *Moys.* (GNO VII/1 22,16–23; 86,20–89,14).

37 *Beat.* VI (GNO VII/2 141,25–27); siehe auch *Cant.* III; IV (GNO VI 90,3–16; 104,10–15); vgl. auch Basileios der Große, *De Spiritu Sancto* IX 23, (SC 17bis, 326–328 Pruche).

38 GNO II 186,14–15: καὶ πᾶν τὸ περὶ αὐτὸ θεωρούμενον ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει.

39 *CE* III/V 58 (GNO II 181,16–17): σαφῶς διδασκόμενοι διὰ τούτων μὴ τὸν αυτὸν νομίζειν τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον; *CE* I 420 (GNO I 149,3–4).

(im ontologischen Sinne der wesentlichen Differenz) mit den Namen der heilsökonomischen Beziehung des Dreieinigen Gottes zur Schöpfung gleichsetzt.

Zur dieser Einsicht kann man gelangen, indem man zusätzlich zwei Punkte in Betracht zieht: 1. Die stoische Lehrmeinung, der zufolge die das relationale Sich-Verhalten ausdrückenden Namen (πρός τί πως ἔχοντα) dadurch gekennzeichnet werden, dass sie im Gegensatz zu den nach einem wesentlichen Unterschied existierenden (κατὰ διαφοράν) stehen, passt zu dem zentralen Anliegen Gregors, Gott den Vater in einer Beziehung zum eingeborenen Sohn hinzustellen, die dem Gemeinsamen der göttlichen Ousia keinen Abbruch tut und so der Heiligen Schrift Rechnung trägt, die sowohl dem Vater als auch dem Sohn die um die göttliche Natur betrachteten wesentlichen Idiome zuerkennt.[40] 2. Wird die semantische Funktion der Namen *Vater-Sohn* stoisch aufgefasst, dann legen sie bei derer Anwendung, im Gegensatz zu der aristotelischen Auffassung, eine logisch notwendige Wechselbeziehung zwischen zwei gleichartigen und gleichrangigen *Hypostasen* (*bzw. Hypokeimena*) an den Tag. Wagt man so die ewige Existenz des Sohnes aus dem Vater und mit dem Vater abzulehnen, dann wird dies notwendig die Ablehnung auch der Ewigkeit der immerwährenden Vollkommenheit des Vaters nach sich ziehen, denn alles, was Gott ist und hat, ist Er und hat Er von Ewigkeit her und in aller Ewigkeit.[41] Gregor nimmt jede Gelegenheit wahr, um seinen Gegner daran zu erinnern, dass die Namen *Vater* und *Sohn* „eine beziehungsmäßige Konjunktion" (σχετικὴ συζυγία) nahe legen; er wendet dabei auch andere alternative Termini an: Ausdrucksweisen, wie z.B. „die *Hypostase* des Eingeborenen wird mit dem Vater zusammengemeint (συνυπακούεται)",[42] „wenn wir Vater sagen, dann meinen wir damit auch den Sohn mit (συνεπινοοῦμεν)"[43] u. a,[44] enthüllen die besondere semantische Funktion der *pros ti pos echonta* und lassen sie die Zusammenbetrachtung der dadurch bezeichneten *Hypokeimena* als eine logisch notwendige erscheinen.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich folgendes bemerken: Die *CE* III 1,131–134 Stelle legt am beredtesten davon Zeugnis ab, dass Gregor nicht nur die semantische Funktion von Namenspaaren, wie *Vater-Sohn* u.a., im Sinne von *Cambridge change*, bzw. von den πρός τί πως ἔχοντα Namen der Simplikius' Stelle kennt;

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40 *Simpl.* (GNO III/1 66,13–16); *Abl* (GNO III/1 44,14–16).

41 *CE* III/I 79 (GNO II 31,18–32,23; hier 31,26–28): οὐκοῦν ἐξ ἀϊδίου ἐστὶν ὅπερ ἐστίν· οὐ γὰρ ἐγένετο, ἀλλ' ἐστὶ πατήρ· ἐπὶ Θεοῦ γὰρ ὃ ἦν καὶ ἐστὶ καὶ ἔσται; vgl. *CE* I 378 (GNO I 138,5–7).

42 *CE* I 424 (GNO I, 187,5–6); vgl. *Or. Cat.* (GNO III/4 11,3–4).

43 *CE* III/VII 47 (GNO II 231,21–22).

44 *CE* I 378 (GNO I 138,5–7); *CE* I 498 (GNO I 170,13–16); vgl. *CE* III/II 107–108 (GNO II 87,24–88,15).

er versteht sie vielmehr von den „gemäß einer Differenz“ konzipierten πρός τι Namen des Simlikios zu unterscheiden. Zu den ersteren rechnet er die Namen der immanenten Trinität (*Vater-Sohn*), zu den letzteren die heilsökonomischen Termini (*Arzt*, *Hirt* u. a.). Da kein christlicher Autor vor ihm—nicht einmal Basileios—dies so deutlich tut, lässt sich berechtigterweise die Vermutung aufstellen, dass dem nyssenischen Text eine philosophische (eher doxographische?) Quelle zugrunde liegt, zumal die *CE* III 1,131–134 Stelle die Struktur einer eigenständigen literarischen Einheit aufweist und die makrotextuelle Analysis der einschlägigen *Termini* zweifelsohne stoischer Herkunft sind.[45] Aber das ist nicht alles: Ausgerechnet in anderen Textstellen bleibt der Nyssener dem gleich skizzierten Schema nicht treu. Sowohl diese als auch die Quellenfrage werden uns jetzt beschäftigen.

b) *Die kritische Rezeption: Die gregorianische Modifizierung, bzw. Abweichung von den schulphilosophischen Lehrmeinungen*

Mit Hilfe der stoischen Unterscheidung von πρός τι und πρός τί πως ἔχοντα, die, obwohl nicht wörtlich übernommen, trotzdem der *CE* III 1,131–134 (GNO II 48,1–24) Stelle zugrunde liegt, gelang es Gregor, die Funktion der Namen *Vater* und *Sohn* auf eine Art und Weise zu verdeutlichen, die sowohl das vor aller Ewigkeit Zusammensein von Vater und Sohn, als auch ihre Wesensgleichheit ans volle Licht förderte. Trotzdem will Gregor auf keinen Fall die Hypostase des Sohnes in diejenige des Vaters, etwa auf sabelianische Weise aufgehen lassen, als ob sie nur Modi der heilsökonomischen Manifestation des aus jeder Hinsicht einen göttlichen Wesens wären. Im Gegenteil: die drei göttlichen Hypostasen lassen sich ungeteilt voneinander unterscheiden. Worin liegt der Unterschied? Ausschließlich darin, dass jeder Hypostase hauptsächlich je ein ihr eigenes und unmitteilbares kennzeichnendes Merkmal hinzubetrachtet wird (προσθεωρεῖται).[46] Nach einer Lesart dieser für die kappadozische Theologie sowie für den Glauben der Kirche grundlegenden Lehre, d. h. die Stelle *CE* III 5,56ff.[47] ist die hypostatische Eigenschaft der Hypostase des Vaters „das Ungezeugt-Sein“ und die des Sohnes „das Gezeugt-Sein“. Aber Gregor geht in diesem Zusammenhang auf begriffliche Erklärungen über, die für unser Thema sehr aufschlussreich sind. Er behauptet nämlich, dass wenn wir hören, *der Vater ist „ungezeugt“*, bzw., *das „Ungezeugt-Sein“ des Vaters* (und selbstverständlich auch, *der Sohn ist „gezeugt“, bzw. das „Gezeugt-Sein“ des Sohnes*)

45 Vgl. die oben zitierte Stelle *CE* III/VI 13 (GNO II 197, 2–6).

46 Siehe u. a. *CE* I 278–280 (GNO I 107,23–108,19); auch GNO I 147; 166.170–172; *CE* III/V 56 (GNO II 180,22–23 und 181,20–21).

47 GNO II 180,13–182,16.

„unsere Verstandeskraft in zwei gedankliche Richtungen" geteilt wird: Erstens fassen wir durch das „ist" (ἐστί) das ὑποκείμενον auf; dies geschieht um so mehr, wenn wir sagen „Dieser ist entweder gezeugt oder nicht gezeugt". Denn es ist das Demonstrativum *Dieser* (οὗτος), das unserem Verstand die Bedeutung des ὑποκείμενον einprägt.[48] Kaum braucht man anzumerken, dass der Terminus ὑποκείμενον, der hierbei den Sinn der individuellen Existenz hat, sich mit der 1. stoischen Gattung vergleichen lässt, zumal die von Gregor betonte Funktion des demonstrativen Pronomens, nach der richtigen Auffassung neuerer Autoren, bei stoischen Zusammenhängen auf die erste Gattung, d. h. das existierende ὑποκείμενον, hinweist.[49] Zweitens begreifen wir durch die Wörter „ungezeugt" und „gezeugt" das, was im ὑποκείμενον als individuelle Eigenschaft existiert (προσόν). Zudem wird in demselben Kontext das „Ungezeugt-Sein" (und gemeint ist auch das „Gezeugt-Sein") ausdrücklich als „wie sein" (πῶς εἶναι)[50] des ὑποκείμενον" bezeichnet; eine Äußerung, die den Anlass gibt, an die 3. stoische Gattung des Sich-Verhaltens (πως ἔχον) zu denken.[51] Wesentlich für uns allerdings ist hierbei, dass Gregor die Namen *Vater* und *Sohn* im Licht der πρός τί πως ἔχοντα Namen (*Cambridge change*) versteht, ohne dabei die eigene Existenz jeder Hypostase, „welche die Definition ihrer Natur empfängt",[52] zu vernachlässigen. Zur Herausbildung dieser Auffassung könnten auch philosophische Lehrmeinungen beigetragen haben, wie die des Aristoteles- Kommentators des 2. Jh. Alexandros von Aphrodisias, der, immer nach Simplikius' Zeugnis, behauptete, dass die Relationsnamen (πρός τι) immer mit noch einer anderen Gattung-Kategorie bestehen, wie der *Vater* mit

48 *CE* III/V 56 (GNO II 180,20–21).

49 A. C. Lloyd, „Grammar and Metaphysics in Stoa", in: A. A. Long, *Problems in Stoicism*, London 1971, 58–74, hier 66–68; Menn, „The Stoic Theory of Categories", 226–227; Übrigens ist es nicht die einzige gregorianische Stelle, worin das *Hypokeimenon* stoisch verstanden wird. Siehe *CE* I 182.283 (GNO I 80,7–12 und 109,22–26). Trotzdem sei darauf verwiesen, dass Gregor das *Hypokeimenon* nicht im Sinne des stoischen Materialismus konzipiert; ihm liegt beim Gebrauch dieses Terminus hauptsächlich an der konkreten Existenz eines Wesens und nicht an dessen metaphysischer Identität.

50 GNO II 182,11–13.

51 Vgl. G. D. Panagopoulos, „Die Vermittlung des Sohnes", 386 mit Anm. 8; auch L. Karfikova, *„Ad Ablabium, quod non sit tres Dei"*, in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen 17–20 September 2008)*, SVigChr 106, Leiden 2011, 131–168, 159–162.

52 Vgl. GNO I, 189,19–20.

dem Ousia.[53] Gregor selbst hebt übrigens hervor, dass das πρός τι (πως ἔχον) an sich über keine leibliche Substanz verfügt, sondern um die sichtbare leibliche Substanz betrachtet wird; so zählt er das πρός τί πως ἔχον expressis verbis zu den qualitativen Eigenschaften (ποιότητες) aus welchen das ὑποκείμενον, d. h. das konkret existierende Seiende zusammengesetzt ist.[54] Auch die oben erwähnte Kritik des Boethos an der stoischen Auffassung von πρός τί πως ἔχον könnte man dabei in Betracht ziehen.

Trotzdem darf man nicht unberücksichtig lassen, dass auch Gregors' Bruder, Basileios der Grosse, an einer für unsere Frage aufschlussreichen Stelle die pure relationale Bedeutung der Namen *Vater-Sohn* hervorhebt: „der eine bezeichnet nur die Beziehung zum anderen"; er fügt aber sofort als eine Erklärung des Gesagten hinzu: „Denn Vater ist derjenige, der einem anderen … das Prinzip des Seins gewährt hat; und Sohn ist derjenige, der von einem anderen das Prinzip des Seins der Zeugung nach gehabt hat".[55] In diesem Punkt stimmt Gregor mit seinem Bruder überein: Die Relation ist nicht mit einer Substanz, bzw. Hypostase identisch.[56] Die Relationsnamen verweisen auf eine charakteristische Eigenschaft der Substanzen, bzw. Hypostasen, die sich aufeinander beziehen.[57]

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53 Apud Simplikius, *In Arist. Cat.* (CAG VIII 293,5–7 Kalbfleisch): ἴδιον δέ τι ἐπὶ τῶν πρός τι ἐνεῖδεν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος τὸ πάντως σὺν ἄλλῃ κατηγορίᾳ ὑφεστάναι, ὡς ὁ μὲν πατὴρ μετὰ οὐσίας.

54 *CE* II 115–116 (GNO I 259,28; 160,1–4); vgl. *Hex.* (PG 44, 69C). Siehe A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, London 1979, V 56 und VIII 428; auch F. X. Risch, *Gregor von Nyssa. Über das Sechstagewerk. Verteidigungsschrift an seinen Bruder Petrus*, BGrL 49, Stuttgart 1999, 133, Anm. 97.

55 *Adversus Eunomium* II 22 (SC 305, 92 Sesboüé): πατὴρ … καὶ υἱὸς … τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν ἐνδείκνυται μόνην. Πατὴρ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἑτέρῳ τοῦ εἶναι … τὴν ἀρχὴν παρασχών· υἱὸς δέ, ὁ ἐξ ἑτέρου τοῦ γεννητῶς εἶναι τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐσχηκώς. D. G. Robertson, „Relatives in Basil of Caesarea", 285, verweist auf die Stelle eines Scholiasten des Dionysios Thrax (*Sch. Vat. in Dionys. Thrax* 235.9–12 Uhlig) als mögliche Quelle des Basileios; dies scheint mir kaum nachweisbar, da der Inhalt dieser Stelle, d. h. dass die *Relation* nicht an sich existiert, ein geläufiges Gedankengut darstellte, das auch bei anderen Autoren, ja sogar in doxographischen Kompendien, begegnen dürfte. Dieselbe Ansicht wird übrigens auch von den Neoplatonikern akzeptiert (vgl. A. D. Conti, „La theoria della relazione nei commentatori Neoplatonici delle Categorie di Aristotele", *Rivista Critica di Storia della Filosofia* 38 (1983) 259–283 hier 277). Allerdings wäre ich mit Robertson, „Relatives in Basil of Caesarea", in toto, darin einig, dass der Hintergrund der Basileios' Relationslehre in *Adv. Eun.* stoischer Herkunft ist.

56 In diesem Punkt verfehlt den wahren Sinn der kappadokischen Theologie T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God. One Being three Persons*, Edinburg 2006, 157.

57 Bezüglich Basileios schreibt DelCogliano, *Basil of Cesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 222: „I maintain that Basil understands the relation the relatives name reveal

Allerdings ist es m. E. wahrscheinlicher, dass Gregor hierin eher dem biblischen Gebrauch des Namens *Vater* Rechnung trug, wie er selbst in *CE* I 573[58] zu verstehen gibt, worin er die vom Neuen Testament dem Heiligen Geist zugewiesene Akklamation: „Abba, der Vater" (*Röm.* 8,15), als „einen absolut ausgesprochenen und eine Beziehung bezeichnenden Namen" charakterisiert (αὕτη ἐστὶ ἡ τῆς μερικῆς σχέσεως ἀπολελυμένη φωνή). Unsere dazu geäußerte Meinung lässt sich dadurch bekräftigen, dass kurz darauf Gregor sich auf das „Vater unser" der *Oratio Dominica* beruft, um so von seiner späteren Darlegung der *pros ti pos echonta* in *CE* III, (GNO II 48) abzuweichen, ja sogar zu widersprechen den Eindruck gibt.

Um etwas konkreter zu werden: Der heilige Gregor teilt in *CE* I 568–573[59] im Gegensatz zu *CE* III 1,131 ff. (GNO II 48,1–24) die Namen zunächst einmal in zwei allgemeine Gruppen ein. Hierin ist aber die erste Gruppe die der absolut und ohne jede Beziehung zu anderen ausgesprochenen Namen; die zweite ist die der nach einer Beziehung genannten, d. h. unsere berühmten πρός τι Namen. Soweit nimmt Gregor auf die ähnliche Unterscheidung Bezug, die sein Bruder Basileios vielleicht in Anknüpfung auf eine Quelle dargelegt hatte, die mit einer Stelle aus Sextus Empeirikos *Contra Mathematicos* zu vergleichen ist.[60] Diese zweite Gruppe teilt Gregor nun weiter ein, einerseits in diejenigen

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as a characteristic property that is parallel with the distinguishing mark or marks that proper and absolute names reveal". Hinsichtlich Gregor versucht I. A. Dimitrakopoulos, „Ἡ γραμματική καί λογική κατηγορία τῆς σχέσεως ἤ πρός τι στόν Γρηγόριο Νύσσης", *Βυζαντιακά* 21(2001), 17–50, 39–40 und passim, den Nachweis zu erbringen, dass dessen Lehre über die Relation weder stoisch, noch aristotelisch, sondern philosophisch inkonsistent sei. Abgesehen davon, dass Dimitrakopoulos aus seiner Geringschätzung der philosophischen Leistungen Gregors keinen Hehl macht, leidet seine Interpretation daran, dass sie sich hauptsächlich auf die rhetorische Anwendung von philosophischen Begriffe seitens Gregors konzentriert, um auf diese Weise die innere Inkonsistenz des nyssenischen Denkens zu zeigen; kein Wunder, dass *CE* III/1 131–134—Schlüsselstelle für das Verständnis der nyssenischen Auffassung von Relation—in diesem Aufsatz kaum anzutreffen ist. Übrigens darf man sich fragen, warum Gregor den Richtlinien der philosophischen Tradition sklavisch Folge leisten sollte.

58 GNO I 191,20–22.

59 GNO I 190,19–192,1.

60 Vgl. Basileios der Große, *Adv. Eun.* II 9 (SC 305, 36–38 Sesboüé); Sextus Empeirikus, *Adv. Math*. VIII 161–162 (skeptische Lehre) und X 263–265 (pythagoreische Lehre). Die eventuelle Quelle von *Adv. Eun.* II 9 glaubt D. G. Robertson, „Relatives in Basil of Caesarea", 278–281, in einem Text von Heliodoros (8.Jh.), der die *Ars Grammatica* von Dionysios Thrax kommentierte, aufgespürt zu haben. (Siehe auch DelCogliano, *Basil of Cesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 212–214 und 222–253). Dem Inhalt nach weisen beide Textstellen Ähnlichkeiten auf und es ist deshalb mehr als wahrscheinlich, dass

πρός τι, welche, wie der *Arzt* und *Hirt* aus *CE* III 1,131 ff., als κατὰ διαφοράν sind und andererseits in diejenigen, die sich je nach dem Willen der sie verwendenden Menschen, so Gregor, einmal als absolut und an sich, einmal als πρός τι im Sinne der κατὰ διαφοράν ausgesprochen werden. Hier scheint Gregor die stricto sensu πρός τί πως ἔχοντα Namen der Stoiker, welche in *CE* III 1,131 ff. Stelle zugrunde liegt, außer acht gelassen zu haben; und so wird der Name *Vater* an *CE* I 572–573 Stelle nicht nur im Verhältnis zu seinem natürlichen, d.h. konsubstanziellen Sohn, sondern einerseits als absolute Bezeichnung, andererseits in Bezug auf die Ihn berufenden Menschen, die nicht wesensgleich mit Ihm sind, betrachtet.

Dass hier kein Beleg eines widerspruchsvollen Verständnisses des Namens *Vater* (und auch der πρός τι Namen) in *CE* I und III ausfindig zu machen ist, braucht man kaum anzumerken. Im Gegenteil verleiht dies der Feststellung vollen Ausdruck, dass ausgerechnet das biblische Zeugnis und die Erfahrung des christlichen Lebens und nicht die schulphilosophischen Meinungen die wesentlichen mitgestalteten Faktoren von Gregors Gedanken sind.

Wie es auch sein mag, setzt Gregor parallel dazu die Äußerungen „ungezeugt sein", bzw. „gezeugt sein" mit der unmitteilbaren Eigenschaft der Hypostase des Vaters, bzw. des Sohnes gleich und er sieht sie zugleich als einen Begriff des „wie sein" (πῶς εἶναι) an. Ausgerechnet darin tritt das Specificum der gregorianischen Anwendung der πρός τί πως ἔχοντα auf dem Gebiet der göttlichen Wirklichkeit zutage: Die wechselseitige Beziehung, die die Verwendung der Namen *Vater* und *Sohn* nahe legen, hat sozusagen ein *Fundamentum in re*; sie darf auf keinen Fall als eine rein gedankliche Erfindung angesehen werden, die uns dazu irreleiten könnte, den Unterschied der göttlichen *Hypostase* nur auf logisch-semantischer Ebene zu suchen. Ebenfalls verfehlt man den wahren Sinn der diesbezüglichen nyssenischen Äußerungen, falls man die Anwendung der πρός τι nur im Licht der grammatischen Tradition erklären will; denn die vorangehende Analyse der nyssenischen Textstellen ließ eine philosophisch strukturierte Argumentation in den Vordergrund rücken, die nicht einfach auf die Tradition der alexandrinischen Grammatiker zurückzuführen ist.

Traditionsgut der alexandrinischen Grammatiker in *CEun* Eingang fand; was aber die Frage der direkten Quelle (bzw. Quellen) des Basileios' Textes anbelangt, zwingt mich die strukturelle Ähnlichkeit, die sich zwischen *Adv. Eun.* II 9 und der oben zitierten Sextus' Stelle feststellen lässt, der Vermutung Robertsons und Del Coglianos' gegenüber zurückhaltend zu sein. (Übrigens vertraten diese Unterscheidung Denker, wie z. B. Hermodoros; siehe M. Mignucci, „The Stoic Notion of Relatives", 197).

Dennoch ist die Beziehung nach Gregors Auffassung nicht mit den *Hypostasen* identisch—darauf muss man nachdrücklich hinweisen. Und dies kann konsequenterweise auch an dem nyssenischen Sprachgebrauch erkannt werden, spricht doch der Bischof von Nyssa stets von *pros ti* Namen und nie von πρός τι Dingen. Aber das Fundament der Beziehung sind die wesensgleichen *Hypostasen* mit je ihrer eigenen charakteristischen Eigenschaft, welche diese *Hypostasen* voneinander ungeteilt unterscheidet. So ist für Gregor die vom Namenspaar *Vater-Sohn* zum Ausdruck kommende Beziehung Gott des Vaters zu Gott dem Sohn die Beziehung zweier wirklich existierender und konsubstanzieller *Hypostasen*, denen von Ewigkeit her alles gemeinsam ist, außer der Existenzweise. Auch mit diesem Aspekt der gregorianischen Auffassung von *pros ti pos echonta* Namen könnte man eventuell die Lehrmeinung von Kornutos vergleichen, der gemäß „πρός τι diejenigen Wesen seien, in denen die Beziehung zu einem Anderen zusammenfällt … die Beziehung aber zu einer anderen Hypostase".[61]

In diesem Licht sind wir der Meinung, dass Gregor sich nicht mit dem stoischen Lehrstück über die πρός τί πως ἔχοντα zufrieden gab; vielmehr soll er auch Rücksicht auf die an den Stoikern seitens anderer Denker der Spätantike geübte Kritik genommen haben. Die oben genannte Darlegung der diesbezüglichen stoischen Lehre und der Kritik, die, nach Simplikius, Boethos an ihr übte,[62] könnte uns den Punkt anbieten, an den anknüpfend, wir folgende Hypothese aufstellen: Es sollte eigentlich das Werk von Boethos über die Relationsnamen, das einen umfangreichen Quellenbefund dargestellt haben sollte, Gregor von Nyssa den Quellenbefund angeboten haben, worin er sowohl die zur Diskussion stehende stoische Lehre in einer mit der von Simplikius identischen, oder zumindest leicht davon abweichenden Lesart, als auch die auf sie von verschiedenen Autoren der Spätantike geübte Kritik zusammengefasst fand. Diese Vermutung unterstützend könnte nicht nur der Charakter der *CE* als Ganzes, das sich als eine theologisch orientierte grandiose Variation zum Thema der Relation in allen ihren Lesarten bezeichnen lässt, sondern vielmehr die festgestellte Tatsache, dass Gregor das grundlegende Schema der von Simplikius überlieferten diesbezüglichen stoischen Lehre mit peripatetischen und mittelstoischen Elementen zu verbinden scheint, die in einem enzyklopädieartigen Kompendium leicht zu finden wären.

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61 Simplikius, *In Arist. Cat.* (CAG VIII 187,30–33 Kalbfleisch): Κορνοῦτος πρός τι εἶναί φησιν οἷς συμπροσπίσπτει πρὸς ἕτερον ἡ σχέσις, οὐ μέντοι ἡ συντακτική, ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν ἐχόντων καὶ ἐχομένων, ἀλλ' ἡ πρὸς ὑπόστασιν …

62 Simplikius, *In Arist. Cat.* (CAG VIII 163,6–7 Kalbfleisch).

Die bisherige Analyse lässt sich wie folgt zusammenfassen:

1) Es kann, m. E., als gesichert gelten, dass in *CE* III 1,131–134 (GNO II 48,1–24) die Lehre über die 4. stoische Gattung der Relation in der Form ihrer Unterteilung in πρός τι (Relation) und πρός τί πως ἔχοντα (*Cambridge change*) zugrunde liegt. Darüber hinaus modifiziert Gregor das oben genannte Schema, insofern dies von seinem theologischen Anliegen diktiert war: Obschon Gregor in den *pros ti pos echonta* Namen *Vater-Sohn* (*Cambridge change*) das trefflichste semantische Mittel sah, um die Ko-Ewigkeit der göttlichen Hypostasen von Vater und Sohn ans volle Licht zu bringen, scheint er trotzdem Boethos' Kritik der diesbezüglichen stoischen Lehre zu teilen und das stoisch aufgefasste πρός τί πως ἔχον mit Hilfe von Kornutos' Vorschlag, demgemäß die von den πρός τί πως ἔχοντα geäußerte Relation als eine Relation zwischen zwei Hypostasen zu verstehen ist, an den Fall der Beziehung zwischen Vater und Sohn in der Heiligen Trinität anzupassen.

2) In *CE* I 568–573 (GNO I 190,19–192,2) scheint Gregor die Auffassung der Namen *Vater-Sohn* als *pros ti pos echonta* zu relativieren. In der Tat nimmt sich Gregor klarzustellen vor, dass der lebensorientierte Gebrauch der Sprache in einigen Fällen zu einer zwiefältigen semantischen Funktion eines Namen führt, „je nach dem Willen" des Sprechers. Aber ausgerechnet diese mehrdeutige Funktion des Namens ist nicht mit seiner objektiven Referenz zu verwechseln. So lehnt Gregor in *CE* I 568–573 (GNO I 190,19–192,2) die Auffassung der semantischen Funktion des Namens *Vater* als πρός τί πως ἔχον nicht ab; er erinnert aber vielmehr an die Möglichkeit, diesen Namen sowohl als „an sich", als auch als πρός τι zu gebrauchen, eine Einsicht, zu der er kam, indem er dem biblisch bezeugten und im Leben der Kirche erfahrenen heilsökonomischen Aspekt des Dreieinigen Gottes Rechnung trug.

Ausgerechnet hierin zeigt sich aber am deutlichsten, dass Gregor sich beim Aufnehmen von allerlei philosophischen Elementen, kaum für den systematischen Ausbau eines philosophischen Systems interessiert; nichtsdestoweniger sieht er in den logischen und metaphysischen Schemata nur hermeneutische Mittel, die hauptsächlich im Dienst der Verdeutlichung und des Schutzes des kirchlichen Kerygmas über das neue Leben in Christus dem Gott setzt. Dieses Leben aber lässt sich, wie Gregor bei jedem Anlass unterstreicht, nicht einmal in der feinsinnigsten logischen und sprachlichen Konstruktion erschöpfen, weil es letztendlich geistlich- charismatisch, und d.h. unaussprechlich in seinem Kern ist. Die *CE* III 6,4[63] legt beredtes Zeugnis davon ab.

63 GNO II 187,98–11: ὡς διὰ τούτου μαθεῖν ὅτι ἔν ἐστι σημαντικὸν τὴς θεῖας φύσεως ὄνομα, τὸ ἀρρήτως περὶ αὐτῆς ἡμῖν θαῦμα κατὰ ψυχὴν ἐγγινόμενον; vgl. *Cant.* II (GNO VI 61,16–17 Langerbeck), worin dieses unaussprechliche Wunder als eine mystische Beziehung des Gläubigen zu Gott beschrieben wird.

Οἰκείωσις in Gregory's Theology: Reconstructing His Creative Reception of Stoicism

Ilaria Ramelli

Methodological Guidelines and State of the Art

I argue that Gregory transformed this Stoic doctrine integrating it in his Christian thought. I show how the οἰκείωσις theory works at the theological and anthropological level in Gregory's thought and is a powerful instrument in his eschatology. A comparison with Origen's Christianisation of οἰκείωσις—which will have to be published separately—brings to light Gregory's indebtedness to Origen and remarkable innovations.

This advances Nyssen research by investigating Gregory's reception of one remarkable aspect of Stoicism (among others). The presence of Stoicism has been fruitfully investigated in Basil,[1] and partially Nyssen,[2] but much is still to be done for the latter. This study hopefully casts light on a substantial desideratum.

The Stoic οἰκείωσις Theory in the Imperial Age and Early Christian Thinkers

Gregory wanted his *Contra Eunomium* to be presented to Libanius (*Epist.* 14,4 [GNO VIII/2 49]) for its rhetorical perfection and classical *paideia*. Philosophy was part and parcel of *paideia*—for Gregory, Origen's close follower, a prominent part. Against this backdrop, the re-elaboration of the οἰκείωσις doctrine is conspicuous. This theory was crucial to Stoic ethics.[3] It appears in the Old

1 G. Panagopoulos, *Η στωική φιλοσοφία στη θεολογία του Μ. Βασιλείου. Συμβολή στην έρευνα των σχέσεων χριστιανικής θεολογίας και ελληνικής φιλοσοφίας τον 4ο αιώνα*, Athens 2009; my review forthcoming in *RFN*.

2 Especially Daniélou, Drobner, Zachhuber. See I. Pochoshajew, "Stoicism", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary*, SVigChr 99, Leiden 2010, 713.

3 E.g., T. Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of* Οἰκείωσις, Aarhus 1990; R. Radice, *Oikeiosis*, Milan 2000; R. Bees, *Die Oikeiosislehre der Stoa*, I, Würzburg 2004; G. Striker, "The Role of Οἰκείωσις in Stoic Ethics", *OSAPh* 1 (1983) 145–167; M. W. Blundell, "Parental Nature and Stoic *oikeiōsis*", *AncPhil* 10 (1990) 221–242; B. Inwood, "L'Οἰκείωσις sociale chez Épictète", in: K. Algra-P. W. van der Horst – D. Runia (eds.), *Polyhistor*, Leiden 1996, 243–264; G. Reydams-Schils, "Human Bonding and Οἰκείωσις", *OSAPh* 24 (2002) 221–251; K. Algra, "The Mechanism of

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Stoics, but developed in Neostoicism. "Social οἰκείωσις" valued interpersonal relationships: one's friends, spouse, and family.[4] This emerges in Musonius (under Nero)[5] and especially Hierocles (100–150 AD?), the author of *Elements of Ethics* and a treatise on καθήκοντα, interconnected precisely through the οἰκείωσις doctrine. The treatise begins where the *Elements* end. The latter discuss οἰκείωσις, from its beginning in each newborn, including animals, to the developments of social/deontological οἰκείωσις, exclusive to humans. Social οἰκείωσις implies "appropriate acts", belonging to "preferable ἀδιάφορα". Appropriate acts toward parents, gods, spouse etc. are discussed in Hierocles' treatise.

Hierocles adopts the image of concentric circles, through which οἰκείωσις is applied to wider and wider groups of "others", beginning with the "appropriation" of one's self and body, on to one's family and city, up to all humanity.[6] These circles' diameter give the measure of the intensity of one's affection toward people, on which the relevant "appropriate acts" are based. Hierocles felt the need to perform a "contraction of circles" (reducing the distance from each circle to the next) thus creating the closest οἰκείωσις possible.[7]

The Stoics posited a relation of οἰκείωσις also between each human and the divine, grounded in the sharing of rationality. Even the bonds that interconnect humans with humans were motivated by the common paternity of Zeus/Jupiter, allegorised as the sharing of all humans in the λόγος.[8] This divine side of οἰκείωσις will inspire Christian thinkers who adapted οἰκείωσις to Christian theology.

In the New Testament I found traces of an assimilation of the οἰκείωσις theory, significantly in an author steeped in Hellenistic ethics such as that of the "Pastorals".[9] But οἰκείωσις especially influenced Patristic philosophy, obviously in the case of thinkers acquainted with Greek philosophy. Among these, Clement and Origen must be singled out, but the most important is Gregory,

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Social Appropriation", *OSAPh* 25 (2003) 265–296; M.-A. Zagdoun, "Problèmes concernant l'*oikeiōsis* stoïcienne", in: G. Romeyer-Dherbey – J.-B. Gourinat (eds.), *Les Stoïciens*, Paris 2005, 319–334; T. Brennan, *The Stoic Life*, Oxford 2005, 154–168.

4 See I. Ramelli, "Transformations of The Household and Marriage Theory", *RFN* 100 (2008) 369–396; Ead., "Ierocle Neostoico in Stobeo", in: G. Reydams-Schils (ed.), *Thinking Through Excerpts*, Turnhout 2011, 537–575.

5 My *Musonio*, Milan 2001; *Stoici romani*, Milan 2008.

6 My *Hierocles*, Leiden 2009.

7 As argued in my commentary, in *Hierocles.*

8 My "Dio come padre nello Stoicismo Romano", in: S. Crespo (ed.), *Scripta Antiqua*, Valladolid 2002, 343–351; *Allegoria*, Milan 2004; "L'interpretazione filosofica di Zeus Padre", in: M. Ruiz (ed.), *Visiones mítico-religiosas del padre*, Madrid 2004, 155–180.

9 My "The Pastoral Epistles and Hellenistic Philosophy", *CBQ* 73 (2011) 562–581; "1 Tim 5:6", *Aevum* 84 (2010) 3–16.

who knew the works of both. As one of the most philosophically minded Fathers, he creatively integrated this theory in his Christian thought, influenced by the Platonic tradition and Origen's Christian Platonism.[10]

CE III and a Difference from Stoic Οἰκείωσις. Theology of the Image and Οἰκείωσις

In Gregory's writings, οἰκεῖος, οἰκειόω, οἰκειότης etc. occur more than 300 times; οἰκείωσις more than twenty. Οἰκείωσις is pivotal in Gregory's philosophy. A remarkable feature of his Christianisation of οἰκείωσις is his revisiting of the bond of οἰκείωσις between humans and God in the light of Genesis and Christian theology, integrating it in his "theology of the image". However, in *CE* III the difference between the Stoics' and Gregory's οἰκείωσις emerges. In *CE* III 6,63 (GNO II 208), while adopting the οἰκείωσις lexicon, Gregory emphasises the metaphysical abyss between Creator and creatures, inconceivable in Stoic immanentism. Such is the distance between God and humans that οἰκείωσις between them is due more to *grace* than to *nature* (*Virg.* 2,3).

In *CE* III Gregory insists that one's οἰκείωσις to God is not a datum, but must be realised through moral efforts; in this, he proves closer to Stoic deontological οἰκείωσις. One must choose voluntarily to make oneself familiar with the Good, i.e. achieve οἰκείωσις with God (*CE* I 118). The opposite—adumbrated in the same passage—is making oneself familiar to evil. We should appropriate the Good; if we appropriate sin (Paul's meaning of "flesh"), this is an *alienation* from our nature (*Antirrh.* [GNO III/1 199,4;228,17]). We must have οἰκείωσις to the Good (*Benef.* [GNO IX 100,20]), and, since God is the Good, familiarity/affinity with God means ἀλλοτρίωσις from evil and begins there (*Beat.* [PG XLIV 1293,47]). Contrawise, alienation from the Good is tantamount to οἰκείωσις with evil (*Fat.* [GNO III/2 44,21]).[11] One acquires οἰκείωσις with God through virtue (*Or.* 238,14): true nobility consists in being "familiar with God" (*Bas.* 25).[12]

Gregory joins οἰκείωσις to his "theology of the image", which, besides else, he shares with his inspirer Origen.[13] This mitigates the abyss between God and creatures. Each human is God's εἰκών, endowed with God's beauty; this is

10 My *Gregorio di Nissa Sull'Anima e la Resurrezione*, Milan 2007; "Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism", *VigChr* 63 (2009) 217–263; "Origen the Christian Middle/Neoplatonist", *JECH* 22 (2011) 98–130.

11 Cf. *Inscr.* (GNO V 62,16); *CE* III 1,118 (GNO II 43–44) on making oneself familiar to evil.

12 Cf. *Or.* 254,19.

13 See Ramelli, *Sull'Anima*; for this doctrine in *Ad Ablabium*, G. Maspero, *Trinity and Man*, SVigChr 86, Leiden 2007.

everyone's πρῶτον οἰκεῖον, i.e. what is primarily proper to each, belonging to one's nature. Gregory declares that the soul's beauty is οἰκεῖον to God's beauty, "familiar to it and of the same nature"; so she can contemplate God through her beauty, as through a mirror and image (*An. et res.* [PG XLVI 89CD]). "Image" here is not metaphorical, but grounded in Gregory's theology of the image. This is how Nyssen Christianises (theologises!) the Stoic idea of πρῶτον οἰκεῖον, on which οἰκείωσις depended: he claims the first thing which is "proper and most familiar" to each human is God, each human bearing God's image.

Recovering the πρῶτον οἰκεῖον: Apokatastasis. Its Anticipation by Ascetics, Evil, and God's Infinitude. Οἰκείωσις as the Principle of the Resurrection

God's image, initially pure and perfect, was blurred by sin, due to the adhesion of human free will to evil. However, the image's beauty will be recovered, since Christ—who is God and God's beauty—assumed humanity. After purification, all humanity will recover its πρῶτον οἰκεῖον; restoration of divine beauty in all will be universal apokatastasis.[14] All humans will recover "the beauty that is proper [ἴδιον] to them" (*Cant.* XV [GNO VI 439,18]): ἴδιον is a variant of οἰκεῖον,[15] as *Mort.* (GNO IX 42,20) confirms, where Nyssen describes apokatastasis with the same imagery: we shall "return to the Beauty that is proper and familiar [οἰκεῖον] to us, in which we were formed in the beginning, in our Archetype's image". The interpretation of apokatastasis as humanity's οἰκείωσις was inspired by Origen: "apokatastasis is a return to what is originally proper [τὰ οἰκεῖα]" to humanity (*Hom. in Jer.* 14,18).

Thus, Gregory can assure that the good expected for the τέλος is "proper and familiar to humanity by nature" (*Inf.* [GNO III/2 82,4]). This is because this Good is God, in whose image humanity was created, and who will be "all in all" (*1Cor* 15,28). God's being "all in all" is interpreted by Gregory—as by Origen—in the sense that God will be all goods for all, since God, qua absolute Good, is the source of all goods.[16]

Apokatastasis is anticipated by ascetics because they perfectly realise οἰκείωσις with God/the Good. Alienating themselves from what is earthly—passions—they become οἰκεῖοι with angels. This is clear from Gregory's depiction of Macrina's and her community's life as angelic, and from *Inscr.* (GNO V

14 See my "Good and Beauty", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden, Boston 2010, 356–363.

15 Clement *Paed.* III 1 also uses ἴδιος as a synonym of οἰκεῖος in reference to Christ and Truth.

16 Ramelli, "Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism", *VigChr* 61 (2007) 313–356.

123,13), which describes οἰκείωσις with angels. Asceticism anticipates apokatastasis because the ascetics' "angelic life" in their οἰκείωσις with angels is identified with humanity's life before the fall, and therefore its life in apokatastasis (*Op. hom.* [PG XLIV 188,46]). Gregory is arguing from the similarity between ἀρχή and τέλος; if "life in apokatastasis" is "familiar to that of angels", clearly humanity's life before the transgression was "an angelic life".

Life οἰκεῖος with God cannot absolutely be οἰκεῖος with evil, since God has no affinity (οἰκείωσις) to evil (*Antirrh.* [GNO III/1 180,24]). Evil is extraneous to God's nature, since "by its nature, the Good is the Godhead" (*An. et res.* [PG XLVI 89CD]). Gregory received the metaphysics of Origen, who called God αὐτοαγαθόν and identified God with Plato's Good. Indeed, Gregory and Origen—and Evagrius—ground in this their doctrine of the fall and apokatastasis, their theology of history and eschatology. God alone is the Good, by nature and eternally; creatures are good only by participation. Only to God is the appellative "Good" proper (οἰκεῖος: *Arium* [GNO III/1 82,16]). Therefore, what is familiar to God is good (*Op. hom.* [PG XLVI 164,9]).

Only the transcendent Godhead is the Good, οἰκεῖον to itself only, and perfectly simple (*CE* I 1,237). This enhances the gap between God and creatures: this is why οἰκείωσις between them is a matter of grace, achieved through Christ's mediation. If only God is the αὐτοαγαθόν and beings are good by participation in it, rational creatures, endowed with free will, orient themselves toward good or evil and cannot remain stable in the Good: only in apokatastasis will they be able. Because only God is the Good and the Being, and the source of goods and existence for creatures—vs. evil, which has no ontological subsistence—rational creatures who choose evil tend to non-being. But God's Providence, without suppressing free will,[17] does not allow creatures to be annihilated, since God created them that they might exist. This argument was already Origen's, but Gregory adds one grounded in God's infinitude: creatures cannot advance indefinitely, or remain forever, in evil, since evil is limited; after one has reached its extremity, one cannot but return to the infinite Good/God.[18] Evil is no creature of God, but rational creatures' bad choice, and, being pure negativity, will return to its nature, non-existence.[19] Evil's οἰκείωσις is its disappearance.

Οἰκείωσις is the principle, not only of apokatastasis, but also of the resurrection: the soul re-appropriates the body that was her own (*Op. hom.* 27): after

17 For this tenet of Origen's see my "La coerenza della soteriologia origeniana", in: *Pagani e cristiani alla ricerca della salvezza*, Rome 2006, 661–688; "Origen, Bardaisan, and the Origin of Universal Salvation", *HThR* 102 (2009) 135–168.

18 Ramelli, "Good."

19 My "1Cor 15:24–26", *SMSR* 74 (2008) 241–258.

the return of the particles of one's body to their respective elements, the soul can still recognise and assemble them, drawing to herself what is συγγενές, ἴδιον, and οἰκεῖον. Resurrection as the soul's act of οἰκείωσις of what belongs to her seems to me to parallel Gregory's notion of the eventual apokatastasis as God's supreme act of οἰκείωσις of all creatures, which I point out in the next section. This is another aspect of Gregory's assimilation between resurrection and restoration, resulting from his holistic view of the resurrection, not only of the body, but also of the soul. This is Origen's heritage.

Apokatastasis as God's Οἰκείωσις and Christ's Role in Οἰκείωσις between Humans and God

Apokatastasis, as I argued, is presented as re-appropriation of the πρῶτον οἰκεῖον by each human. This is Gregory's *anthropological* description of apokatastasis as οἰκείωσις. But the initiative of re-appropriation comes from God, and Gregory's utmost description of apokatastasis as οἰκείωσις is *theological*: apokatastasis is the glorious οἰκείωσις performed by God, who regains possession of what is his own, i.e. creatures, after their alienation in evil. This passes through purification of sins (*An. et res.* [PG XVLI 97Dff.]): sinners' suffering in this process is but a painful side effect of God's action of pulling souls out of evil and attracting them back to himself; the Godhead vindicates what is *its own.* God's love "draws *what is its own* [ἴδιον] to itself from the ruins of irrationality and materiality . . . It demands and drags to itself whatever came to being through It and for It"; ἴδιον means again οἰκεῖον. Apokatastasis is the Divinity's supreme οἰκείωσις: it makes its own again what is its own and was made enemy by evil.

God's creatures will return to God, their πρῶτον οἰκεῖον, in what, from their viewpoint, is universal οἰκείωσις to God. This is not pantheism: Gregory follows the distinction between Creator and creatures that was clarified by Origen, who distinguished what is *homoousion* and what is οἰκεῖον to God (*Comm. Io.* XIII 147–150).[20] The divine Persons are consubstantial with one another; creatures can only be "familiar" with God.

Since the Good is God and Being, Gregory—like Origen and Evagrius—can maintain the ontological *and* chronological priority of Good over evil, virtue over vice. Qua coeternal with God/the Good, virtue existed *before* vice, good *before* evil; therefore, evil and vice will not exist forever. "There was a time when evil did not exist, and there will be one when *it will no more exist*, whereas there was no time when virtue did not exist, and there will be no time

20 My "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism", *VigChr* 65 (2011) 21–49.

when it will not exist . . . evilness is the soul's death and illness—but *virtue comes before*" (Evagr. *KG* S[2], I 40–41).[21] Gregory embedded this principle—that virtue precedes vice—in the οἰκείωσις doctrine, remarking that humanity was created familiar with virtue, so as to voluntarily choose the Good (*Thaum.* [PG XLVI 893,42]). Consequently, sin was the falling down from οἰκείωσις and kinship with God/the Good (*Benef.* [GNO IX 95,3]).

What is most familiar to God in every human is intellect, as is stressed in *De anima*;[22] in *Op. hom.* [PG XLVI 161,25] too Nyssen insists that our intellect is familiar to what is "according to nature" (another Stoic principle). But what is "according to nature" for humans? Plato claimed it is virtue;[23] the Stoics spread this concept. Gregory—like Origen and Evagrius—follows it.

Evil's vanishing when all have accomplished οἰκείωσις to the Good will produce the disappearance of death—the consequence of evil—and the victory of life. It is proper to life and light to have death and darkness vanish. Life and Light are Christ's ἐπίνοιαι. Gregory found the annihilation of death announced in *1 Cor* 15,26, "the last enemy will be destroyed: death";[24] in Origen (*Comm. Rom.* V 7) he found that in the end death will disappear before life, i.e. Christ, as eternal life cannot allow for eternal death. On this basis Gregory describes, in *CE* III, true life for rational creatures as οἰκείωσις to God and death as falling away from God (*CE* III 6,77 [GNO II 213]).

Οἰκείωσις between humans and God passes through *Christ*, like apokatastasis.[25] Christ has operated the greatest οἰκείωσις between divinity and humanity, making his own all that is human, by uniting himself to humanity (*Tunc et ipse* [GNO III/2 2,9]). Not accidentally, Gregory affirms that Christ has made all that is human οἰκεῖον to himself in *Tunc et Ipse*, which is devoted to apokatastasis and the clarification that Christ's final submission to God is not a subordination of Christ's divinity, but the salvation of humanity, which is Christ's body and will voluntarily submit to Christ.[26]

Christ, albeit ἀπαθής himself, has appropriated (οἰκειοῦσθαι) human weaknesses (*Antirrh.* [GNO III/1 181,21; cf. 160,16]). This, because he has united himself

21 My *Evagrius' Kephalaia Gnostica*, forthcoming in Leiden, and *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis*, Leiden 2013.

22 My philosophical commentary in *Sull'Anima*. Cf. *Antirrh.* (GNO III/1 192,17). Our intellect becomes familiar, οἰκειοῖ ἑαυτὸν, with Christ; *ibid.* 197,27 and 23.

23 As I argued in *Il Basileus come Nomos Empsychos*, Bibliopolis 2006.

24 See my "1Cor 15:24–26".

25 For Origen and Nyssen apokatastasis depends on Christ: my "Origen and Apokatastasis: A Reassessment", in: S. Kaczmarek – H. Pietras (eds.), *Origeniana Decima*, Leuven 2011, 649–670.

26 My "In Illud", *StudPatr* 49 (2010) 259–274.

to humanity (*ibid.* 160,20).[27] Especially in *CE* III, Gregory explains that Christ even appropriated human *malediction*, thus liberating humanity from it (*CE* III 10,12 [GNO II 293]). This is a fundamental premise, inherited by Gregory—and Athanasius—from Origen, for humanity's θέωσις:[28] if Christ, who is God and without sin, has "appropriated" what is human, humanity is liberated from sin and divinised. Οἰκείωσις between God and humanity passes not only through Christ's inhumanation, but also through his resurrection, which in *Diem lum.* (GNO IX 222,24) is said to produce all humans' restoration to familiarity (οἰκείωσις) with God and thereby their freedom.

As will be clear in the next two sections, Christ's role in οἰκείωσις also passes through the "theology of the image".

Anthropological and Social Consequences of Οἰκείωσις

The notion of the divine πρῶτον οἰκεῖον of all humans provides Gregory with a powerful basis for his attack on slavery and oppression, and his evaluation of women as an image of God. Gregory condemned slavery more radically than any Father, *de iure* and *de facto*, unlike others who accepted it as a result of the fall, or even endorsed it.[29] Gregory's exhortations to the manumission of all slaves is not episodic, or merely grounded in φιλανθρωπία, but consists in a demonstration of slavery's intrinsic *illegitimacy* and *impiety*.

Gregory's main argument comes from the "theology of the image". Humans, being in God's image, participate in God's perfections, the first of which is freedom. They were created by God for virtue, which, as I have shown, is something οἰκεῖον to their nature; it is also something that has no master (ἀδέσποτον), according to Plato *Republic* 617E, whose definition Gregory takes over; consequently, no human can be subject to a master as a slave (*Op. hom.* [PG XLIV 184B]). The same argument is advanced in *Eccl.* (GNO V 336): "God said: Let Us create the human being in Our image and likeness. Thus, please, tell me: who will sell and buy the creature who is in God's likeness and master of the whole earth?"

27 *Ibid.* 182,3 Gregory insists on the appropriation of our *pathê* by Christ to prevent docetic drifts.

28 See my "Deification", in *EBR*, VI, Berlin 2013, 468–472.

29 As I argued in "Gregory Nyssen's Position in Late-Antique Debates on Slavery and Poverty", *JLA* 5 (2012) 87–118.

Gregory's most developed argument is found in his fourth *Homily on Ecclesiastes* (GNO V 334–352), where he comments on *Eccl* 2,7.[30] Gregory urges hearers to emancipate their slaves also in *Pasch.* (GNO IX 250–251),[31] describing Easter as a liberation feast.[32] Here, he significantly assimilates masters to Pharaoh, who elsewhere symbolises evil and the devil.[33] He strongly demands of them to release their slaves and restore them to παρρησία: this liberation is "good", because slavery is *evil*. Gregory associates παρρησία with freedom and the cessation of slavery also in *De anima*, where it represents the end of enslavement to evil and of punishments—which are consequences of evil—thus coinciding with apokatastasis. The concept is indeed the same in both works: since resurrection and apokatastasis are closely related according to Gregory in *De anima*,[34] the cessation of slavery at apokatastasis is a return to life and a resurrection. This is also why in his Paschal homily, soon after speaking of slavery as the privation of παρρησία, Gregory equates slavery with *death.* This is more than a rhetorical hyperbole. Gregory goes on to identify prisoners and slaves, as both are deprived of freedom, but—he argues—if prisoners are released when a new royal baby is born, or on a victory, a fortiori slaves should be emancipated on Christ's victory over death and his rebirth. Gregory urges his flock to choose "virtue" and reject "evil", which implies that slave-owning is *evil* and manumission is virtuous. Therefore, all masters must set their slaves free. They are humans, and precisely thanks to Christ's Paschal work all humans inherit God, the supreme Good.[35]

30 M. Bergadá, "La condamnation de l'esclavage dans l'Homélie IV", in: S. G. Hall (ed.), *Gregory of Nyssa*, Homilies on Ecclesiastes*: an English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the Seventh International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*St. Andrews, 5–10 September 1990*), Berlin; New York, 1993, 185–196 was among the first, with Dennis, to call attention to this passage.

31 Ed. E. Gebhardt, *GNO IX/1*, Leiden 1967, 245–70; 250–51. See J. C. M. van Winden, "In Defence of the Resurrection", in: A. Spira – Ch. Klock (eds.), *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa, Translation and Commentary. Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa, Cambridge, England, 11–15 September, 1978*, PMS 9, Cambridge (MA) 1981, 101–121; M. Harl, "L'éloge de la fête de Pâques", *ibid.* 81–100; 91–93 on rich masters in the audience.

32 He refers to a Church decree for their emancipation, utterly "good and humane", because it set slaves free, and in a dignified way.

33 This allegory derives from Philo and Origen. See my "Philosophical Allegoresis of Scripture in Philo and Its Legacy in Gregory of Nyssa", *SPhiloA* 20 (2008) 55–99.

34 Ramelli, *Sull'Anima*.

35 See my "Good."

In his fourth homily on Ecclesiastes, from the beginning (334), Gregory criticises a human who presumes to be a master of fellow-humans, with "outlandish presumption": one cannot claim to possess a fellow-human "before God", since people belong only to God. Those who claim to own people steal God's possession (335) and go "against God", who made all humans free and endowed them with free will. Slavery is *against God*; this is a *theological* argument. The law of God, Gregory argues, grants humans no privilege over one another; God made each human the master of all creation, and anyone who dares enslave a human "fights against *God's* decree". Slavery is not, as other Fathers claimed, an expedient solution or even a punishment decided by God, but is definitely *against God's will*. Those who presume to own slaves divide human nature, which is one, into slavery and mastery (336). God did not divide humanity so, either before or after the fall, or because of individual sins, as many Fathers assumed; that division comes from evil men. As a consequence, slavery is an *evil*, which cannot be justified.

A human, God's image, the owner of the world, a creature endowed with λόγος—thereby participating in the Logos, Christ—can be bought at no price. Gregory uses here the theological argument from the "theology of the image": every human is free, being an image of God, who is absolutely free and powerful. Not even God—the only one who could—would enslave humanity; God rather *liberates* humanity: as humans enslaved themselves to sin, God, far from endorsing or even establishing slavery as necessary in their decayed condition, called them again to freedom. Only a fool, deceived by the devil, could presume to be the master of God's image (337): again, slavery's *evilness* is unequivocally set. All humans are equal and subject to the same emotions, and will undergo the same judgment. Thus, it is forbidden to divide human nature, which is one, into slavery and mastery. God did not do so, and whoever dares do so sins *against God*. It is human greed that caused slavery, Gregory concludes, echoing *1 Tim* 6,10 (339).

The Argument from the "Theology of the Image" and Freedom

The connection between Gregory's argument in this homily and his *De hominis opificio* has been well illustrated by Dennis.[36] However, I deem it important to highlight the close connection between Gregory's ideas in this homily and his *De anima*, roughly contemporary to it, as well as other impor-

36 T. J. Dennis, "The Relationship between Gregory of Nyssa's Attack on Slavery in his Fourth Homily on Ecclesiastes and his Treatise *De Hominis Opificio*", *StudPatr* 17.3 (1982) 1065–1072.

tant texts. According to Gregory in *De anima*, the human being is God's image, and therefore free. This freedom derives from the "theology of the image", which is also found in *Op. hom.* (PG XLIV 140.184B), and will culminate in the final apokatastasis, i.e. the perspective from which Gregory sees anthropology and history. The human being's freedom is proclaimed throughout *De anima*, which is oriented to apokatastasis and draws relations between protology and eschatology (one of the aspects of Origen's legacy in Nyssen).[37] In this connection, Gregory describes human freedom, a gift from God, as the principle of the first sin, which brought about a mixture of good and evil instead of pure good (81BC):[38] "The human being, voluntarily, in the movement of its free will, abandoned the condition that was unmixed with evil and rather drew upon itself the life constituted by a mixture of opposites". But God immediately remedied this foolish choice, which not only determined, but coincided with, the fall and a limitation of human freedom. Gregory emphasises the necessity of a liberation from passions and sins, which enslave people to evil: ἀπάθεια is the condition that is proper to humans; it is part of their πρῶτον οἰκεῖον such as planned by God at the beginning, and will be recovered in the end, when all are free from sin and enslavement to sin, which produces suffering here and punishment in the beyond.

Indeed, Gregory interprets *Matt* 18,23–25 and *Lk* 7,41 in the light of Plato's contention that virtue admits of no masters and bears the stamp of freedom:[39]

> The debtor is handed to the torturers until he has paid his whole debt . . . accumulated by means of participation in miserable things taken upon himself during his earthly life . . . after taking off all that which is *alien to himself, i.e. sin*, and *getting rid of the shame deriving from debts*, one can achieve *a condition of freedom and confidence*. Freedom *is assimilation to what has no master* and is endowed with absolute power [τὸ ἀδέσποτον καὶ αὐτοκρατές], and *at the beginning it was given us by God, but then it was covered and hidden by the shame of debts*. Consequently, everyone who is free will adapt to what is similar to them; but *virtue admits of no masters*: therefore, everyone who is free will turn out to be in virtue, since what is free has no master [ἀδέσποτον τὸ ἐλεύθερον]. Now, *God's nature is the source of all virtues*; so, *in it there will be those who*

37 See my *Sull'Anima.*

38 Translations from *De Anima* based on my new edition (*Sull'Anima*). E. Mühlenberg's critical edition is now available: A. Spira, E. Mühlenberg, GNO III/3, Leiden, Boston 2014.

39 *An. et res.* (PG XLVI 101–104). Commentary in my *Sull'Anima.*

> *have attained freedom from evil*, that, as the Apostle says, *God may be "all in all"*.[40]

Sin must be discarded by all, qua *alien* to humanity; humans must reject it to achieve οἰκείωσις to the Good/God and freedom. The end will be the achievement of freedom for all humans, a freedom that dwells in virtue and in God/the Good, when all have rejected sin, and evil has definitely disappeared (a pillar in Origen's and Gregory's metaphysics): "*Evil must necessarily be eliminated, absolutely, in every respect, once and for all*, from all that is: since in fact it is not . . ., *neither will it have to exist, at all*. For, as evil does not exist in its nature outside will, once each will has come to be in God, *evil will be reduced to complete disappearance*, because no receptacle will be left for it" (*An. et res.* [PG XLVI 101]).

Οἰκείωσις to God—the acquisition of affinity to God and thence assimilation (ὁμοίωσις) to God, who is absolutely free—is again described here as a participation in God's image, which was blurred by sin and covered by the shame of debts, due to enslavement to sin, but will recover its pureness and radiance after purification, symbolised by the extinction of debts. Human intellect, with its faculties, including free will, is God's gift and the reason for the likeness between humans and God, which is by grace: "The soul's ability to speculate, discern, and investigate the existing beings belongs to it by nature, and for this reason it retains in itself the gift of grace by virtue of which it is in the image of God". Rational creatures, indeed, were created as willing receptacles and admirers of divine Wisdom (*An. et res.* [PG XLVI 105AB]). These receptacles are "endowed with free will" and infinitely growing in the knowledge and love of God, in conformity with Gregory's ideal of epektasis. Free will is a central feature in human souls: "God's Wisdom, which governs everything, initiated human life; then, the human soul . . . chooses whatever seems good to it with the faculty of free choice that belongs to it, and it becomes whatever it wants" (*An. et res.* [PG XLVI 120C]).

I have thus shown the deep interrelation between Gregory's reflections on human freedom in *De anima* and his thought concerning slavery in his fourth Homily on Ecclesiastes, based on the notion of ἀδέσποτον. Gregory took the latter from Plato, but read it in the light of the Christian doctrine of creation and his "theology of the image". The concept of ἀδέσποτον returns in *Mort.* (GNO IX 54,1–5), in which Gregory emphasises the glory of free will given to humanity qua image of the Godhead, which is ἀδέσποτον in its beatitude. To be ἀδέσποτον—glossed αὐτοκρατὲς καὶ ἄναρχον—is a sign of sovereignty, belonging not only to God but also to God's image (*CE* I 1,554,3–10; *Op. hom.* [PG XLVI

40 *1Cor* 15,28.

136,25–27]; *Beat.* [PG XLIV 1300,39]). For this reason, the saints, who recover God's image in its pureness, appropriate God's "being ἀδέσποτον" (*CE* I 572,3), thereby making the assimilation to God a matter of οἰκείωσις. For what is ἀδέσποτον in us, like what is beautiful and good, is so by participation in God's ἀδέσποτον, beauty, and good (*CE* II 224,10–15).

The argument that all humans are free qua image of God, who is free, is reiterated by Gregory. A limpid expression, related to his argument from freedom in *De anima*, is in *Or. cat.* V 100ff., where Gregory depicts freedom as "the most glorious good".[41] This is repeated in *Beat.* PG (XLIV 1225,59): "the most accurate likeness according to the Prototype's image . . . incorruptibility, beatitude, and τὸ αὐτοκρατὲς καὶ τὸ ἀδέσποτον". The concluding remark in *An. et res.* (PG XLVI 160) is identical.

Plato's statement that virtue has no master, which is the gist of Gregory's argument for all humans' eschatological recovery of freedom in *De anima*, is repeatedly quoted by him, e.g. in *Cant.* (GNO VI 160,17–161,1). Freedom and virtuous maturity, connected by Gregory—as by Paul and Origen—with love, is contrasted with the slavishness of the soul who does good out of fear, and not out of love (*Cant.* [GNO VI 462,7–8]). God wants people to adhere to virtue voluntarily, not forcedly, fearfully and slavishly, because humans have reason and free will (*Or.* 256,19). Plato's definition of virtue as ἀδέσποτον reemerges here. Virtue excludes constraint, implies responsibility, and voluntarily chooses the good. The same Platonic echo, in support of the same argument, is found in *Op. hom.* (PG XLVI 184,28–31).

God's traits, among which freedom is preeminent, were in humanity at the beginning, qua image of God, and will be recovered in the end. Human freedom is freedom of choosing the Good and enjoying it; if one chooses evil, one's freedom is limited (a Platonic tenet). In the present state, after the fall, freedom is restricted by passions, which, like tyrants, enslave people[42] (*Beat.* [PG XLIV 1228,18]). In *Ref. Eun.* 139,6 Gregory joins ἀδέσποτος and αὐτεξούσιος to describe the human soul's free will, which sovereignly chooses whatever it prefers. These adjectives fit the description of God, in whose image the human soul is.

The ἀδέσποτον argument is employed by Gregory also in his Trinitarian debate, and from this an important argument comes for his rejection of slavery. As all humans' ἀδέσποτον reflects God's ἀδέσποτον, Gregory attacks Eunomius who fails to recognise that Christ, being God, cannot be but ἀδέσποτος, and not subject;[43] as Gregory clarifies precisely in *CE* III, Christ is "God from God, ἐξ

41 Gregory adds that our free will entails that the responsibility for the elongation from the Good is not with God, but with humans.

42 Stoic topic found e.g. in Persius, who calls passions *saevos tyrannos.* See my *Stoici romani.*

43 *CE* I 625,13; III 8,52.56–57.

ἀδεσπότου ἀδέσποτος" (*CE* III 8,57 [GNO II 260]).[44] Freedom and equality within the Trinity parallels freedom and equality within humanity. Analogous ideas surface in *Or. dom.* (GNO VII/2 70–71), in which Gregory observes that only irrational creatures are slaves of rational beings by nature, but humanity is divided into slavery and mastery by the exercise of power, not by nature. Thus, Gregory reminds masters that their slaves have the same worth as they have "from the viewpoint of human dignity"; they are deemed slaves only conventionally, for *human* law, not *God*'s. All humans are God's slaves, all culpable before God. In *Beat.* 3 Gregory observes that τὸ αὐτοκρατὲς and τὸ ἀδέσποτον are basic features of all humanity, qua image of God. In contrast to heavenly beatitude, human life on earth is miserable, enslaved to passions and death, but it will be finally liberated from this, which is not οἰκεῖον to it. The τέλος is normative for Gregory and must be imitated already in this world. Like, and better than, the beginning, it realises God's project for all humans, in a perfect οἰκείωσις of humanity to God, and in the fulfilment of God's own οἰκείωσις, by which the Godhead re-appropriates what belongs to it: its creatures.

It is clear from Gregory's passages that his argument against slavery is *theological* first and anthropological after, and is based

> on human freedom as an "image" of God's freedom, and
> on the equality of all humans as an "image" of the equality within the Trinity.

And Gregory's "theology of the image" revisits the οἰκείωσις doctrine.

The Theological Argument from Anti-Subordinationism in *CE* III. Οἰκείωσις within the Trinity and Humanity. Women's and Men's Equality

Indeed, in *CE* III[45] Gregory puts forward the other *theological* argument against slavery, besides that of the presence of God's image in everyone. It is the following: *human nature cannot be divided into slaves and masters, because divine nature cannot*. The analogy of the unity of nature in both divinity and humanity—one and the same nature/substance (φύσις/οὐσία) divided into,

44 Fate, unlike God, is not an independent force and cannot be αὐτοκρατῆ καὶ ἀδέσποτον (*Fat.* GNO III/2 34,21).

45 *CE* I 1,526; III 1,15; 3,54–55; 4,37–38; 5,12; 8,44.50.53.54–58.

respectively, three or many persons/hypostases[46]—shows that slavery cannot divide a nature that is one, be it God's or humanity's.

Gregory's reflection on the unity of human nature depends on his reflection on the unity of divine nature and, therefore, on the Son's non-subordination. Gregory's polemic against "Arian" subordinationism made him aware that subordination and slavery can be applied neither to the Son's divine Person nor to any human person. Maspero[47] rightly refers to *CE*, where Gregory explains the correct, "anti-Arian" understanding of Christ's assuming the form of a slave (*Phil* 2,7). *Tunc et Ipse*, probably shortly posterior, is even more important, I think. Gregory's anti-subordinationism is here related to apokatastasis;[48] deriving each argument and scriptural quotation and interpretation from Origen, as I demonstrated,[49] Gregory claims that the Son's submission (*1Cor* 15,28) must not be interpreted as subordination, but means the submission of humanity, "Christ's body", to God, who will be "all in all". Gregory grounded apokatastasis in his defence of Trinitarian orthodoxy against "Arian" subordinationism, just as Origen grounded it in his defence of orthodoxy against Valentinian predestinationism.[50]

Christ is no slave, but became one to deliver humans from enslavement; this will be realised in the τέλος: "In the life we are waiting for there will be no illness, malediction, sin, or death: likewise, slavery too will disappear with all this" (*CE* III 8,55 [GNO II 259]). Gregory's statements in *De anima* on the eventual cessation of enslavement to sin and of punishments are on the same lines.

Gregory, who founded the equality of nature within humanity on that within the Trinity, thus contrasting Eunomius's subordinationism, emphasises the natural οἰκειότης among the Trinity's persons: in *CE* I 222, therefore, he criticises Eunomius, who denies natural οἰκειότης between Father and Son.[51] A discussion is devoted to this in *CE* III 1,99 (GNO II 37): the Son is οἰκεῖος to the Father, and not ἀλλότριος, by nature, from the viewpoint of his substance. Οἰκειότης between Father and Son implies unity of nature, i.e. their sharing the

46 See my "Origen, Greek Philosophy and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of *Hypostasis*", *HThR* 105 (2012), 302–350.

47 "Slavery", *BDGN*, 683–684.

48 See my "The Trinitarian Theology of Gregory of Nyssa in his *In Illud*", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism, Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008)*, SVigChr 106, Leiden, Boston 2011, 445–478.

49 *Ibid.*

50 As I argued in *La coerenza.*

51 Cf. *CE* III 8,60.

selfsame nature (*ibid.* 1,102.119): the Son is οἰκεῖος to the Father by nature (*ibid.* 6,48)[52] i.e. by substance (*ibid.* 1,99).

Human nature as well is *one* nature, although there are *many* persons, all equal because they share the same nature. Gregory applies the οἰκείωσις theory to both divine and human nature—mainly through his theology of the image and his idea of apokatastasis as οἰκείωσις. In both cases this doctrine demonstrates the equality of all individuals within that nature: among all humans and among the Trinity's Persons. The former, grounded in the latter, also entails Gregory's evaluation of women. For all humans, men and women, share the same nature, which reflects that of God (*Gen* 1,26). Gregory is one of the few Fathers who maintained both genders' equality and the secondary, functional nature of gender differences. Precisely because these were not included in God's original plan for humanity—Gregory insists on the basis of Jesus's words—but were established as a remedy to the fall, they will disappear.[53] The other Cappadocians entertained analogous views.[54]

Gregory can stress, everywhere, the intrinsic value of each human also on the grounds of his Christianisation of the οἰκείωσις doctrine. He conceived human nature as a ὅλον φύραμα—a crucial concept inherited from Origen[55]—related by οἰκείωσις within itself and to God, created by God in the beginning for beatitude and knowledge of truth and destined to their attainment in the *telos*.

52 The *oikeiōsis* lexicon is again employed by Gregory in the Eunomian controversy to explain that birth is proper (οἰκείως ἔχει) to what is generated, lack of birth to what is not generated (*CE* II 1,485).

53 See my *Sull'Anima*, 212–214; M. Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa: Ancient and (Post)modern*, Oxford 2007, 163–227; my review in *RBL* 2008.

54 Men and women have the same capacity for virtue; this is underlined by Basil (e.g. *Hom. Iul.* 241A); he likewise emphasises the equality of men and women, who come from the same "lump", share the same honour and dignity, and have full equality. Men even risk proving inferior in piety (241B). Man and woman have "one and the same virtue" and "one and the same nature"; their creation was ὁμότιμος, i.e. of equal honour and dignity; they have the same capacity and will receive the same reward (*Hom. Ps.* 1 [PG XXIX 216–217]). See V. Harrison, "Male and Female in Cappadocian Theology", *JThS* 41 (1990) 441–471. H. Legrand, "Les femmes sont-elles à l'image de Dieu?", *NRTh* 128 (2006) 214–239 remarks that in the Patristic period only the Cappadocians accepted the idea that women are in God's image exactly like men.

55 Origen had the same conception of humanity's "lump" (*Princ.* III 1,22; *Philoc.* 21,21).

Christianisation of Οἰκείωσις: Gregory's Indebtedness and Originality

Basil shares with Gregory a Christianised theory of οἰκείωσις. Panagopoulos[56] observed how Basil liberates this doctrine from its naturalistic-pantheistic connotations to fit a transcendent, Christian worldview. He correctly interprets Basil's concept of Christ as humans' ἐντελέχεια as a revisiting of the οἰκείωσις doctrine. There are, however, other respects to point out. In *Letter* 235,3 Basil notes: "Knowledge is manifold: it comprises perception of our Creator, recognition of God's wonderful works, observance of divine commandments, and οἰκείωσις with God". The latter is the highest form of knowledge, θεογνωσία.[57] Basil depicts the intra-divine relationships in terms of οἰκείωσις, e.g. in *CE* II 23.28 the Father—Son relationship, and *ibid.* II 3 that between the three divine hypostases. *Ibid.* II 4 Basil argues that "Father" indicates, not passion like material begetting, but a relationship of οἰκείωσις, granted either by nature—in the case of the Son—or by grace, in the case of humans. Attainment of οἰκείωσις with God depends on Christ, who recalled humanity from disobedience to οἰκείωσις with God (*Spir.* 15 35).

Though, Nyssen developed a deeper and more philosophically modelled οἰκείωσις doctrine, Christianising features of the Stoic theory of πρῶτον οἰκεῖον and social οἰκείωσις, also under Plato's, Philo's, and Origen's influence. Origen rested on Middle Platonism, which had already combined Platonism with Stoicism; furthermore, he achieved a synthesis between Platonism and *Christian* thought, producing a Christian Platonism.[58] In Origen, a systematic search returned more than 300 occurrences of οἰκείωσις and related terms, only in the extant Greek works (of course, not all of these are related to the οἰκείωσις doctrine). Origen reflects on rational beings' οἰκείωσις with God, and on apokatastasis as οἰκείωσις. In his day, Stoic sources were still available, and Stoic motifs were absorbed in Middle Platonism. Due to the tight word-limit, I must publish separately my discussion of Origen and the availability of Stoic sources in his and Gregory's times. What emerges from the whole of my research is that Origen must be credited with the Christianisation of the οἰκείωσις doctrine; Gregory drew on this, but added important elements of his own, such as the condemnation of slavery on the basis of aspects of the οἰκείωσις doctrine, and especially the notion of apokatastasis not only as humanity's return to what is οἰκεῖον to it, but also as God's glorious οἰκείωσις of his creatures, alienated by evil.

56 *ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ*, 173–302.

57 A. Torrance, "Precedents for Palamas' Essence-Energies Theology in the Cappadocian Fathers", *VigChr* 63 (2009) 47–70.

58 Ramelli, "Origen, Patristic Philosophy."

Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* and Onomatodoxy in Russian Theology

Lara Sels[1]

It has previously been argued that the corpus of mediaeval Slavonic translations of Gregory of Nyssa's writings contains remarkably few versions of Gregory's important ascetic, dogmatic and exegetic treatises; the Slavs knew the great Cappadocian predominantly as a preacher and a hagiographer.[2] This changed radically in nineteenth-century Russia, where a revived interest in the Greek Fathers produced an impressive corpus of Russian translations of patristic texts—the result of an intense translation activity in the monastic centers as well as at the theological academies.[3] Gregory of Nyssa's collected works were translated twice during the nineteenth century.[4] Not only were Gregory's writings available in Russian, they became the subject of scholarship[5] and were

1 All Russian text has been transliterated from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet according to the international ISO/R9 standard. Russian titles have been provided with an English translation; translations from Russian are the author's own unless otherwise mentioned.

2 See L. Sels, "The Slav Reception of Gregory of Nyssa's Works. An Overview of Early Slavonic Translations", in: V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008*), SVigChr 106, Leiden 2011, 593–608.

3 See B. Bobrinskoy, "Le renouveau actuel de la patristique dans l'orthodoxie", in: *Les Pères de l'Église au XX^e siècle. Histoire—littérature—théologie*, Paris 1997, 437–444, 440–441; see also A. C. Kern, *Les traductions russes des textes patristiques. Guide bibliographique*, Chevetogne 1957.

4 The first translation appeared between 1826 and 1847 in *Christianskoe čtenie* (*Christian Reading*), issues of 1826, 1830–31, 1842 and 1847, published by the Theological Academy of Saint Petersburg, while the second was published by the Moscow Theological Academy in the series *Tvorenija svjatych otcov v russkom perevode* (*Writings of the Holy Fathers in Russian Translation*), issues 37–45, between 1861 and 1872. Cf. Kern, *Les traductions russes des textes patristiques*, 32, cf. note 3.

5 Perhaps the most influential aspect of Gregory's thought in late imperial Russia was his anthropology—esp. as it is found in *De hominis opificio*—which played an important part in the development of Russian moral theology; an interesting example of the Russian interpretation of ὁμοίωσις θεοῦ as an ethical imperative can be found in the seminary manual by Pavel F. Soljarskij (1803–1890), *Nravstvennoe pravoslavnoe bogoslovie* (*Orthodox Moral Theology*), Sankt-Peterburg 1869. Cf. also three important monographs of this period, Aleksandr V. Martynov (1856–1901), *Učenie sv. Grigorija Nisskogo o prirode človeka. Opyt issledovanija v*

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actively used in the religious debates of the day, as was eminently clear in the heated debate on the status of the divine Name—the controversy of onomatodoxy, in Russian *imjaslavie*[6]—in the first decades of the twentieth century. The voluminous corpus of polemic writings produced by the onomatodoxes or 'name worshippers' and their opponents[7] contains numerous references to the bishop of Nyssa's works. The present article on the way in which Gregory's arguments Contra Eunomium were recovered in the context of the onomatodox debate now seeks to introduce some of this material into Western Gregory of Nyssa scholarship.

For the present purposes, the history of onomatodoxy cannot be discussed but superficially.[8] The dispute over the divine Name started with the publication

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oblasti christianskoj filosofii IV v. (*The Teaching of St Gregory of Nyssa on the Nature of Man. Attempt at an Exposition in the Field of Fourth-Century Christian Philosophy*), Moskva 1886; Dmitrij I. Tichomirov (born 1855), *Sv. Grigorij Nisskij kak moralist. Ėtiko-istoričeskoe issledovanie* (*St Gregory of Nyssa as a Moralist. Ethical-Historical Comments*), Mogilev-na-Dnepre 1886; Viktor I. Nesmelov (1860–1920), *Dogmatičeskaja sistema sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (*The Dogmatic System of St Gregory of Nyssa*). 2 vols. Kazan' 1887–1888.

6 In recent years *imjaslavie* received considerable scholarly attention: two monographs on the onomatodox controversy and onomatodox theology have issued from the pen of the Russian metropolitan Ilarion Alfeev (Hilarion Alfeyev): H. Alfeyev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église. Introduction à l'histoire et à la problématique des débats onomatodoxes*, ÖBFZPhTh 47, Fribourg 2007, and, by the same author, *Le Nom grand et glorieux. La vénération du Nom de Dieu et la prière de Jésus dans la tradition orthodoxe*, Paris 2007. Recent collections of archival documents and other texts concerning the onomatodox conflict are A. M. Chitrov – O. L. Solomina, *Zabytye stranicy russkogo Imjaslavija* (*Forgotten Pages of Russian Onomatodoxy*), Moskva 2001; E. S. Poliščuk – S. M. Polovinkin, *Imjaslavie. Antologija. Onomatodoxy. An Anthology*, Moskva 2002; I. Alfeev, *Spory ob imeni božiem. Archivnye dokumenty 1912–1938 godov* (*The Disputes on the Name of God. Archive Documents 1912–1938*), Sankt-Peterburg 2007.

7 Onomatodoxes, Fr. *onomatolâtres*, Russ. *Imjaslavcy* ("those who glorify the Name") or *imjabožniki* ("those who deify the Name") against onomatomachs or onomatoclasts, Russ. *Imjaborcy* ("those who fight the Name"); the reference to the iconoclast controversy is eminently clear.

8 For the historical background, see e.g. B. Schultze, "Der Streit um die Göttlichkeit des Namens Jesu in der russischen Theologie", *OrChrP* 17 (1951) 321–394; A. Nivière, "Les moines onomatodoxes et l'intelligentsia russe", *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 29/2 (avril–juin 1988) 181–194; T. E. Dykstra, *Heresy on Mt. Athos: Conflict over the Name of God Among Russian Monks and Hierarchs, 1912–1914*, Crestwood New York 1988 (Master's Thesis, St. Vladimir's Seminary; online http://www.samizdat.com/imiaslavtsy.html, last consulted 05.02.2011); G. M. Hamburg, "The Origins of 'Heresy' on Mount Athos: Ilarions Na Gorakh Kavkaza (1907)", *Religion in Eastern Europe* 23/2 (april 2003) (online http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/

of a book in 1907, written by the Schema-monk (monk of the Great Habit) Ilarion,[9] who had lived in the Russian Panteleimon Monastery on Athos for some twenty years before he retreated to the Caucasian mountains. His book with the lengthy title "On the Mountains of the Caucasus, a Conversation between Two Elders-Hermits on the Inner Union of Our Hearts with the Lord through the Jesus-Prayer, or Spiritual Work of Contemporary Hermits"[10] touched upon the nature of the divine names, particularly within the context of the hesychast Jesus Prayer ('Prayer of the Heart').[11] Initially, Ilarion's book was received well, especially among Russian monks on Athos. It passed ecclesiastical censorship and was reprinted twice within five years after its appearance. However, critical voices found their way from the Holy Mount to the public forum in Russia and a negative review branded the book as heretical. The objections concerned the emphasis on a mystical identity of the divine name—especially the name of Jesus—and God Himself, particularly in the

undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/2003/hamburg03too.doc, last consulted 24.01.2011), and Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), esp. 43–89.

9 He was born as Janvarij Domračev around 1845 and he died in 1916. Little is known of his life; for the scanty information we have on him, see e.g. Hamburg, "The Origins of 'Heresy' on Mount Athos" (cf. note 8), 3–12 and Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), 6–9.

10 Schimonach Ilarion, *Na gorach Kavkaza. Beseda dvuch starcev pustynnikov o vnutrennem edinenii s Gospodom našich serdec črez molitvu Iisus Christovu, ili Duchovnaja dejatel'nost' sovremennych pustynnikov*, Batalpašinsk 1907—the first edition appeared in 1907 in Batalpašinsk, now Čerkessk, in the North Caucasian region. After the second and third editions of 1910 (improved and expanded edition) and 1912 (edition of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves) the book was issued a fourth time in 1998 in Saint Petersburg. A partial reprint—the introduction and chapters one to three—can be found in Poliščuk—Polovinkin, *Imjaslavie Antologija* (cf. note 6), 183–213. The current availability of the text on various websites testifies to the lasting popularity of the work.

11 The repetition of the simple formula "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner", sometimes shortened to "Lord Jesus Christ" or even "Jesus". The prayer, which is said to lead to mystical union with God in the contemplation of the uncreated Light of Tabor, is rooted in the traditions of Euagrius of Pontus's pure prayer and of the pseudo-Macarian *Spiritual Homilies*—see J. Meyendorff, *St Grégoire Palamas et la mystique orthodoxe*, Paris 1959, 18–38; 29: "c'est ainsi que 'la prière intellectuelle' d'Evagre devint en Orient la 'prière du cœur', une prière personnelle explicitement adressée au Verbe incarné, la 'prière de Jésus', où le 'souvenir du Nom' occupe la place essentielle". An account of the early development of the Jesus Prayer can be found in Alfeev, *Le Nom grand et glorieux* (cf. note 6), 139–154; see also M. Basarab, "Das Jesusgebet in der orthodoxen Spiritualität", *Orthodoxes Forum. Zeitschrift des Instituts für Orthodoxe Theologie der Universität München* 5 (1991) 11–22, and J. Serr – O. Clément, *La prière du cœur*, SpOr 6bis, Bégrolles-en-Mauge 1977.

third chapter, tellingly titled "In God's Name God Himself is Present".[12] Ilarion's work was forbidden and in 1913 *imjaslavie*, which was said to imply idolatry and polytheism, was condemned as heretic movement by both the ecumenical patriarch Germanus V and the Russian Holy Synod. Ilarion's defenders, who called themselves *imjaslavcy*, were officially cast outside the Church. Religious life on Athos was deeply affected by the conflict and the resulting onomatodox insurgence. In June 1913 a small Russian fleet brought a special commission to the Holy Mount, headed by archbishop of Vologda Nikon Rožděstvenskij (1851–1918). Military force was used to restore order: soldiers of the Russian imperial navy met the onomatodoxes in the Panteleimon Monastery and the Skete of St Andrew. Some monks were killed, numerous others were wounded, and several hundred others were deported to Russia to be defrocked and locked up or sent in exile. In Russia, where the conflict had flared up in the press,[13] a remarkable paradox emerged: the Russian intelligentsia—philosophers, theologians, publicists, writers, mathematicians—sided with the illiterate Athonite monks,[14] who spread their teaching "im Glorienschein des Martyriums und der

12 "*V imeni božiem prisutstvuet sam Bog*"; Ilarion writes "[…] that in God's name God Himself is present—with the whole of His Being (Essence) [Russ. *suščestvo*] and His eternal attributes [Russ. *svojstva*]" and "[…] that the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord God Himself; that His Name cannot be separated from His Being (Essence), but is one with Him" – Poliščuk – Polovinkin, *Imjaslavie. Antologija* (cf. note 6), 210.211; For a German translation of the long and revealing fragment from which these excerpts are taken, see Schultze, "Der Streit um die Göttlichkeit des Namens Jesu" (cf. note 8), 326–328; excerpts in French on the undiminished presence of God in his Name can be found in Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), 21–22 and *Le Nom grand et glorieux* (cf. note 6), 252–254. Dom André Louf, who deceased in July 2010, was preparing a French translation of Ilarion's book for publication.

13 Viz. in such periodicals as *Russkij inok* (The Russian Monk), *Kolokol* (The Clock), *Russkoe slovo* (The Russian Word), *Cerkovnyj vestnik* (Church Messenger), *Cerkovnye vedomosti* (Church News) and *Novoe vremja* (The New Time); collections with polemical material started to appear from 1914 on.

14 See e.g. L. R. Graham – J. M. Kantor, *Naming infinity: a true story of religious mysticism and mathematical creativity*, Harvard 2009 for the onomatodox sympathies of the mathematicians Dmitrij Egorov (1869–1931), Nikolaj Luzin (1883–1950) and Pavel Florenskij (1882–1937); on the latter see also Nivière, "Les moines onomatodoxes et l'intelligentsia russe" (cf. note 8), who also mentions religious thinkers and writers such as Dmitrij Merežkovskij (1865–1941), Sergej Bulgakov (1871–1944), Nikolaj Berdjajev (1874–1948), Vladimir Èrn (1882–1917), Osip Mandelštam (1891–1938) and others. Also of interest is the exposition on the philosophical reception of onomatodoxy by, for instance, Èrn, Florenskij and Bulgakov in D. Leskin, *Spor ob imeni božiem. Filosofija imeni v Rossii v konstekste afonskich*

ungerechten Verfolgung".[15] A far-going polarization caused the debate between *imjaslavcy* and *imjaborcy* to be conceived as the painful continuation of an existing contradiction between two poles within Russian Orthodoxy itself—an alienation of theology and devotion, a clash between Church hierarchy and the pious people.[16]

Ilarion stayed far from the heated debates and the commotion, while Hieromonk Antonij Bulatovič (1870–1919) presented himself as the intellectual leader of the *imjaslavcy.*[17] The latter's voluminous *Apologia* in defense of the heretics came to be perceived as the theoretical foundation of onomatodoxy.[18] While Ilarion's book aimed at describing an existing devotional practice—the hesychast way of praying[19]—rather than at theological precision, Antonij tried to give the movement its theological footing.[20] He offered an overview of utterances on the power of God's name in the Scriptures, in the Fathers and in the Liturgy in an attempt to reconcile them with the onomatodox *leitmotiv*,

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sobytij 1910–x gg. (*The Dispute on the Name of God. Philosophy of the Name in Russia in the Context of the Athonite Events of the 1910's*), Sankt-Peterburg 2004, 141–305.

15 Schulze, "Der Streit um die Göttlichkeit des Namens Jesu" (cf. note 8), 356.

16 "Most harmful has proven the strange gulf separating theology and piety, theological learning and devotional prayer, the theology of the schools and the life of the Church. A split or schism between the 'intelligentsia' and the 'people' occurred within the Church itself. [...] This is so characteristically expressed in the 1912–1913 'Athos controversy' concerning the names of God and the Jesus Prayer." G. Florovsky, *The Collected Works.* VI, *Ways of Russian Theology*, 2, Vaduz 1987, 290.

17 Born as Aleksandr Ksaver'evič Bulatovič; he was an ethnologist, explorer of Ethiopia and a decorated officer of the Imperial Guard who received monastic tonsure in 1902 and withdrew on Athos in 1908. He was murdered on his family estate near Charkov in 1919. See Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), 90–98.

18 A. Bulatovič, *Apologija very vo Imja Božie i vo Imja Iisus* (Apology of the Faith in the Name of God and in the Name of Jesus), Moskva 1913; the most recent reprint is in Poliščuk—Polovinkin, *Imjaslavie Antologija* (cf. note 6), 9–160. For Bulatovič's theology of the name, see Schultze, "Der Streit um die Göttlichkeit des Namens Jesu" (cf. note 8), 346–356; also Alfeev, Le Nom grand et glorieux (cf. note 6), 273–282 and *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), 98–120.

19 Although the movement was firmly rooted in the century-old Eastern Christian tradition of contemplative monasticism that found its synthesis in Palamite hesychasm, the onomatoclasts characterized it as a dangerous novelty. For a concise survey of the evolution of hesychasme see Meyendorff, *St Grégoire Palamas* (cf. note 11), which also contains an interesting section specifically about the Russian tradition, 150–177; see also the recent bibliography by S. Choružij, *Isichazm: annotirovannaja bibliografija*, Moskva 2004.

20 For a recent—and pro-onomatodox—account of onomatodox theology on the basis of Ilarion's book and Antonij's writings see Leskin, *Spor ob imeni božiem* (cf. note 14), 21–49.

borrowed from Father John of Kronstandt (1829–1908),[21] "God's Name is God Himself".[22] As did Ilarion and other Russian religious writers before him, Antonij defended the eternal pre-existence of the revealed names of God. Special attention was given to the name 'Jesus', which was said to save, heal and work wonders and was considered to be "the Name above every name"—as in *Phil* 2,9—in that it best expressed God's philanthropy and man's salvation through the Incarnation and Christ's death on the cross. Typical of Antonij's version of onomatodoxy was its explicitly Palamite interpretation. The writings of John of Kronstandt and others had paved the way for an identification of the divine names with the Palamite energies (ἐνεργείαι), while God's unknown essence (οὐσία) was identified with some eternal and unnamable Name. By integrating *imjaslavie* into officially orthodox Palamism Antonij tried to mark his opponents as Barlaamites. According to the self-proclaimed apologist of *imjaslavie* the onomatoclasts, in rejecting the divinity of the revealed names and God's undivided presence therein, sided with Palamas's opponent Barlaam of Calabria, who had denied the full divinity of God's energies and their inseparability from His essence.

As Antonij tried to brand his opponents as Barlaamites, one of them tried to rank the onomatodoxes with Eunomius, refuting the new heresy by adopting Gregory of Nyssa's arguments *Contra Eunomium*. In 1913 a series of articles written by the learned canonist Sergej V. Troickij[23] started to appear in the *Supplements to Church News*.[24] A compilation of these articles against *imjaslavie* was published in 1914 in Petersburg under the title "On the Names of

21 For the life and work of this controversial priest, considered a saint already during his lifetime but canonized only in 1990 by the Patriarchate of Moscow, see N. Kizenko, *A Prodigal Saint. Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian People*, Pennsylvania 2003; for his theology e.g. Alfeev, *Le Nom grand et glorieux* (cf. note 6), 229–239.

22 A sample from Antonij's *Apologia* in Alfeev's French translation—*Le Nom grand et glorieux* (cf. note 6), 274–275—gives an impression of the onomatodox rhetoric: "Le nom de Dieu est une Parole de Dieu qui nomme la Substance innommable de Dieu; le nom de Dieu est la gloire de Dieu, parce que la gloire de Dieu est le Fils de Dieu; le nom de Dieu parmi les hommes est le Nom que le Fils de Dieu a révélé dans sa parole, comme un rayon du Nom Innommable: *opération de la Parole de Dieu et Dieu lui-même.*"—cf. the Russian text in Poliščuk—Polovinkin, *Imjaslavie Antologija* (cf. note 6), 39.

23 Sergej Viktorovič Troickij (1877–1972) was an authority in the field of Canon Law and perhaps the most erudite of the opponents of onomatodoxy. For his part in the onomatodox debates see e.g. Schulze, "Der Streit um die Göttlichkeit des Namens Jesu" (cf. note 8), 356–370; Leskin, *Spor ob imeni božiem* (cf. note 14), 124–137; Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), 162–174.226–251.

24 Pribavlenii k Cerkovnym Vedomostjam 1913 n^{os} 37–52.

God and the *Imjabožniki* (Deifiers of the Name)"—the text has recently been reprinted in a volume titled "The Teaching of St Gregory of Nyssa on the Names and the *Imjabožniki*".[25]

The first chapters of Troickij's book deal with "The Teaching of St Gregory of Nyssa on the Names in General" (7–26) and "The Teaching of St Gregory of Nyssa on the Names of God in Particular" (27–67). These two chapters contain Troickij's reading of Gregory—especially of the second and, to a lesser extent, the third book *Against Eunomius*—in the light of the refutation of onomatodoxy in chapters three and four. For his first chapter Troickij clearly draws on Gregory's argumentation concerning the nature of language and names in *CE* II 177–293 and 387–444 (GNO I 276,7–313,3 and 339,8–356,16).[26] The arguments are well known: According to Gregory, words and names are human, both in origin and in their realization; Troickij points to Gregory's emphasis on the material, physical aspect of language and to the fact that Gregory considers man's inventive power (Gr. ἐπίνοια) to be the God-given source of all language.

> First and foremost, St Gregory points out that the names have in no way been revealed by God, as Aetius and Eunomius taught, but that they were formed by humans themselves. The source of origin of all names is not found in God, but in man himself, that is, in the inventive power [Russ. *sposobnost' k izobreteniju*] of his intellect, in the power to invent.[27]

Names, Troickij writes, are no more than symbols, short-lived physical signs that are not intrinsically linked to things. The author proceeds by pointing out that language and naming are part and parcel of man's physical existence; they accommodate the human inability to confront things as they are and to

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25 A. Kovtun – K. Šachbazjan (eds), *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo ob imenach i imjabožniki*, Krasnodar 2002; the polemical tone of the epilogue leaves no doubt as to the editors' anti-onomatodox motives.

26 Troickij's references are to the Greek or the Latin text in volume 45 of Migne's *Patrologia graeca* (further PG). In the present article reference is made to W. Jaeger's (ed.), *Contra Eunomium Libri. Pars prior* and *Pars altera.* GNO I–II, Leiden 1960 (further GNO I–II), and to the English translation by S. G. Hall in L. Karfíková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber, *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004*), SVigChr 82, Leiden 2007, 53–201.

27 Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 7, with reference to PG 45 975; GNO I 282,15–283,2 (*CE* II 197–198). The text is followed by a quotation on the power of ἐπίνοια, viz. GNO I 277,7–278,4 (*CE* II 181–183).

communicate other than in a mediated manner. By quoting Gregory, Troickij points to the fact that the ascription of the names to God leads to an erroneous understanding of Him as physical, marked by composition and mortal. The author further comments on the nature of biblical language as inspired but human, and he warns against too literal a reading of the Scriptures and an anthropomorphic conception of God; God does not speak because He does not need language to mediate between will and act.

Although Troickij builds his second chapter on quotations and paraphrases from throughout the second book *Against Eunomius*, key passages for his dealing with the names for God are *CE* II 97–176, on human ignorance and the naming of God (GNO I 255,1–276,6); 294–304, on various names for Christ (GNO I 313,3–315,29); 469–503, on the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of his attributes and appellations (GNO I 363,13–373,8); 543–560, on the fact that names do not inhere in things (GNO 385,1–390,16); and 578–587, on negative and positive names for God (GNO I 395,3–397,31). It is argued that the names of God are not revealed to man but invented by him, and that there is no intrinsic bond between God and His names. For Troickij as for Gregory, man—ignorant even of the world and of his own body and soul—cannot grasp the essence of God, who ultimately remains unknowable and ineffable, that is, essentially beyond all naming. It is not only God's essence that escapes human thought and speech; God's attributes cannot be expressed in a fully adequate manner either because they are infinite and inextricably bound up with the divine nature. Troickij follows the Cappadocian in his treatment of the many names used to refer to God: the negative names exclude all earthly limitation from Him and give expression to the fact that He transcends human comprehension, while the positive ones express human conceptions of the divine operations in-so-far as they relate to man's life. Troickij argues that the names 'God' (θεός) [Russ. *Bog*], 'Divinity' (θεότης) [Russ. *Božestvo*] and 'Lord' (Κύριος) [Russ. *Gospod'*] refer not to God's essence but to man's conception of His operations.[28] The author comments on the multiplicity and the complementarity of God's names and locates the ground for this multifariousness in the condition of dimensional man, as does Gregory. Biblical passages in which God's name occupies a central place are dealt with, such as the theophany of the divine name to Moses (*Ex* 3,14), ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν; for Troickij ὁ ὤν [Russ. *Syj*] is the one who is but has no name, that is, naked Being stripped of all predication.[29]

28 Cf. *CE* II 149 and 585–586 (GNO I 268,25–269,2 and 397,8–23) and *CE* III/4 59 (GNO II 157,3–6); Troickij also refers to *Abl.* PG 45 121–124; GNO III/1 42,13–46,2.

29 "This name [viz. ὁ ὤν] corresponds best of all to the essence of the Divinity, but all the same it does not offer the very name of the Divinity's nature. On the contrary, precisely

A similar interpretation is given to the Christological hymn (*Phil* 2,9–11), contrary to the onomatodox reading of that passage; the formula "the Name above every name" is said to imply precisely that God transcends the meaning of every name.[30] The names 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit' in the baptismal formula (*Mt* 28,19) are discussed to be qualified as relational names based on human notions of generation and fatherhood; they speak of relationship—God's relation with man, the intratrinitarian relations—not of essence.[31] Not surprisingly in view of the anticipated refutation of *imjaslavie* Troickij then elaborates on the names 'Jesus' and 'Christ':

> As all names of God's Son, the names "Jesus, Christ" have become names for God by virtue of the fact that humanity was taken on by the Son of God in unity with the divine hypostasis, but as this assumption occurred within time, the name Jesus came to refer to the Son of God—became a divine name—within time also, only after the Incarnation of God's Son—the Word of God—and until that time it was just a human name. [...] That the names Jesus and Christ were assumed by the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity only after the Incarnation, assumed by God's Son in his humanity, this idea the Holy Fathers have persistently proclaimed and defended from attacks by heretics.[32]

The argument is abundantly supplied with quotations and paraphrases from Justin Martyr, Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, John Damascene, Cyril of Alexandria, Theophylact of Ochrid and Dimitri of Rostov. At the end of his second chapter, Troickij summarizes:

> As a result, Eunomius's theory on the names of God is wrong. No single name of God is God, and not only does it not express His essence [Russ. *suščnost'*] or nature [Russ. *priroda*], neither [does it express] His attributes [Russ. *svojstva*] and operations [Russ. *dejstvija*]. The names of God

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this name, according to the thought of Gregory of Nyssa, points out that God does not have a name at all." Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 49; cf. *CE* III/6 3–4.8 (GNO II 186,9–182,11 and 188,11–14); Troickij quotes Gregory *CE* III/5 57 (GNO II 180,24–181,13).

30 Troickij quotes *CE* III/9 41 (GNO II 279,16–23).

31 Cf. *Ref.* 14–18 (GNO II 318,3–319, 27); Troickij quotes *CE* I 623–624 (GNO I 205,30–206,8), also referring to *Abl.* PG 45 128; GNO III/1 48,20–51,9.

32 Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 57 and 58.

> are humanly invented signs that only indicate His attributes or His operations as they relate to the world and to man.[33]

In the conclusion of the second chapter the author emphasizes that the names for God, as religious symbols, should be treated with reverence. However, Troickij points out, Gregory of Nyssa has made it quite clear that the true meaning of these names lies precisely in the fact that the absence of an ultimate name for God bears witness to His ineffable greatness.[34] Only in the awareness of the weakness of the human intellect and speech does the humble believer find a way to approach God, through faith and the sacraments of the Church.[35]

> That is why, strictly speaking, there are no names for God, nor can there be. When Holy Scripture uses names for God invented by man, it teaches at the same time that the only possible name for God is 'The One Who Is' [Russ. *Syj*], which implies the idea that God is beyond naming. The recognition of the fact that God does not have a name is the necessary condition for true knowledge of God and for true piety, because only such recognition allows for humble faith and the gift of grace, which gives man knowledge of God on the way to direct and living communion with Him.[36]

In the following chapters Troickij scrutinizes *imjaslavie*, predominantly on the basis of Ilarion's book and Antonij Bulatovič's writings. In the short third chapter "The *Imjabožniki*'s Teaching on the Names" (68–78) onomatodox theory is associated with Platonism and pre-christian magical practices. For believing in eternal revealed names of God that grant man access to the Divine, the *imjaslavcy* are branded as "new Eunomians"[37] who have replaced 'ἀγέννητος' with 'Jesus'. Troickij refutes the onomatodox assertion that things and names are intrinsically linked and that the essence of a thing is fully grasped in its name,[38] and, in particular, the application of that principle to the name 'Jesus'. Troickij's strategy is clear:

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33 Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S. V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 61.

34 Cf. *CE* II 587 (GNO I 397,23–31).

35 With reference to PG 45 880–881: *CE* III/9 56–60 (GNO II 285,4–287,7).

36 Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 64, with reference to PG 45 944C; *CE* II 100 (GNO I 255,22–256,7).

37 Kovtun—Šachbazjan, *S. V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 64.

38 Cf. Ilarion's statement that "[t]he name expresses the very essence of a thing and cannot be separated from it." Poliščuk – Polovinkin, *Imjaslavie Antologija* (cf. note 6), 191.

> If it is true that the teaching of the *imjabožniki* fully coincides with Eunomius's teaching, which has been condemned by the Holy Fathers and the whole Church at the Second Ecumenical Council, a single reference to this parallel will be sufficient to completely bring down the teaching of the *imjabožniki*.[39]

The fourth and final chapter concerning "The *Imjabožniki*'s Teaching on the Names of God and its Refutation" (79–204) aims at the ultimate qualification of *imjaslavie* as heretical "on the basis of the teachings of the Fathers as well as on the basis of science".[40] Troickij relies on Gregory of Nyssa's arguments *Against Eunomius* to reject the onomatodox belief in eternal and divinely revealed names and, in particular, in the power of the pre-existent name 'Jesus'. The *imjaslavcy* are charged with the distortion of the Biblical and patristic texts,[41] the use of non-authoritative sources, a dangerous literalism and a deceptive play with homonymy (for instance with the regular and the religious-metaphorical meanings of 'w/Word' and 'n/Name'). *Imjaslavie* is then put on a par with all kinds of heterodox and heretic persuasions, such as Gnosticism, the Jewish-rabbinical teaching on the *Memra*, Kabbalistic beliefs, Arianism, Lutheranism, to name but a few. Troickij even accuses the *imjaslavcy* of adding a fourth hypostasis—the 'Name of God'—to the Holy Trinity. It is not surprising that the author refuses to accept the onomatodox interpretation of Palamism: the identification of God's names with His energies is refuted together with the belief in His undivided presence in the divine names. Important—and very much to the point—is Troickij's remark that onomatodox theorizing on language and naming was primarily instigated by a desire to defend the extraordinary place granted to the name of 'Jesus' within the context of the 'Jesus Prayer'. Another point of criticism concerns the onomatodox adoration (λατρεία) of the name as if it were God, while inferior honor is accorded to the Holy Icons, the Holy Cross and the Holy Sacraments. The author argues that the names for God are in origin, essence and dignity equal to the icons: they are

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39 Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 81.

40 Within the context of the present article the 'scientific part' of Troickij's argumentation cannot be dealt with in detail. Suffice it to say that Troickij tries to establish an agreement between the Fathers' teachings and certain insights of John Locke (1632–1704) and Max Müller (1823–1900).

41 Concerning Gregory of Nyssa, Troickij writes: "But the teaching of St Gregory of Nyssa destroys at the root the whole heretical concoction of the *imjabožniki*, and that is why they either do not refer to him at all or distort his words by giving them the completely opposite sense." Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 107.

religious signs, human representations of God, products of ἐπίνοια.[42] Finally, the 'magical' aspect of onomatodoxy—the belief that the divine names bless and sanctify, heal and work wonders by themselves—is subjected to severe criticism.

Not surprisingly, Troickij's effort to refute *imjaslavie* was met with depreciative reactions by the onomatodox party, and particularly from Antonij Bulatovič and the influential religious thinker and priest Sergij Bulgakov (1871–1944).[43] The latter's short riposte is more interesting for our present purposes than Antonij's verbose address. To undercut the 'onomatoclast' argumentation Bulgakov aims his arrows against the authority on which Troickij leans, that is, Gregory of Nyssa. The Cappadocian's thinking is said to be unsystematic, occasionally contradictory and sometimes even heretical—with a coy remark on Gregory's advocacy of ἀποκατάστασις. According to Bulgakov:

> He [viz. Gregory of Nyssa] did not develop his worldview as a systematic thinker but as a preacher, apologist and polemist, who, while struggling against particular heretical deviations happened at times to fall into one-sidedness himself, into seeming or real contradictions, or simply into the opposite extreme [...].[44]

While Eunomius is accused of "metaphysical rationalism" Gregory is reproached for his "skeptical rationalism", which is compared to "the transcendentalism of Kant and his school, which is unacceptable for Orthodoxy". This skeptical stand of Gregory, however, is said to be found only in isolated utterances that are inextricably bound up with the Eunomian controversy. As a consequence, Troickij is blamed for identifying Gregory of Nyssa's teaching with

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42 "When the heresy of iconoclasm arose one of the main arguments of the orthodox defenders of the veneration of icons was the comparison of icons with other religious symbols—with the Holy Cross and with the names of God." Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 137.

43 A. Bulatovič, "Imja božie v ponimanii i tolkovanii svv. Grigorija Nisskogo i Simeona Novogo Bogoslova" ("The Name of God in the Understanding and the Commentary of the Saints Gregory of Nyssa and Symeon the New Theologian"), *Missionerskoe obozrenie* (*Missionary Review*) 1916/5–6, 17–56, and S. Bulgakov, "Smysl učenija sv. Grigorija Nisskogo ob imenach" ("The Meaning of Saint Gregory of Nyssa's Teaching on the Names"), *Itogi žizni* (*Results of Life*) 1914/12–13, 15–21; reprints of both texts have been included in Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S.V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 207–241 and 242–248. For Sergij Bulgakov and his dealings with onomatodoxy see Leskin, *Spor ob imeni božiem* (cf. note 14), 232–263.

44 Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S. V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 242.

allegedly unsubstantial traces of transcendentalism in his work. In Bulgakov's view Troickij's exposition lacks a critical philosophical analysis of Gregory's thought as a whole and therefore rests upon a poor foundation. What is more, according to Bulgakov Gregory is not suitable as a witness for the persecution of onomatodoxy:

> On the name *Jesus* in particular we do not dispose of opinions that would give an answer to the contemporary questions of onomatodoxy; they were not in the center of attention and were of little interest to St Gregory.[45]

As regards Troickij's accusation of Eunomianism Bulgakov asserts that there are no parallels whatsoever with *imjaslavie*: while Eunomianism was an attempt to rationalize the Faith and a claim on knowledge of the Divine essence, onomatodoxy is said to be a mystical movement that acknowledges God's essential transcendence. It is rightly remarked that the basic positions of Eunomius, who denied the divinity of the Son, and Christocentric *imjaslavie* could not be further removed from each other. Bulgakov's commitment to a markedly Palamite onomatodoxy (and a certain Palamite backward reading into the Cappadocian use of the terms οὐσία—ἐνεργείαι for that matter)[46] is clear: as God is said to reveal Himself to man through His energies, Bulgakov defends precisely this kind of energetic presence in God's names. These, Bulgakov writes, are to be understood not as instruments of knowledge but as sources of divine power. Troickij's critique of *imjaslavie* is dismissed as unfounded and even deliberately misleading.

Even today, with the position of the Orthodox Church on the compatibility of Orthodoxy and onomatodoxy still unclear, Sergej Troickij's efforts to refute *imjaslavie* are judged less than favorably. This is the case, for instance, in Leskin's pro-onomatodox book and in the work of Ilarion Alfeev, who clearly aims at a final reconciliation of *imjaslavcy* and *imjaborcy*.[47] Although it is admitted that Troickij was a reputable canonist, he is reproached not only with academism, rationalism and western nominalism, but also with an

45 Kovtun – Šachbazjan, *S. V. Troickij, Učenie Sv. Grigorija Nisskogo* (cf. note 25), 246.

46 Informative with regard to this ongoing discussion is A. Torrance, "Precedents for Palamas' Essence-Energies Theology in the Cappadocian Fathers", *VigChr* 63 (2009) 47–70.

47 Leskin, *Spor ob imeni božiem* (cf. note 14), esp. 124–137, and Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), esp. 239–250.

anti-Palamist attitude,[48] ignorance of the mystical-ascetical tradition of Eastern Christianity and a superficial understanding of monasticism.[49] His equation of onomatodoxy and Eunomianism is rejected as strained as it is said to depend upon superficial resemblances in two language theories that were constructed to support utterly divergent ideas, viz. the negation of the Son's divinity on the one hand and the affirmation of man's divinization through the Jesus Prayer on the other. Troickij is accused of having presented a distorted picture of onomatodox doctrine so as to make it fit Gregory of Nyssa's refutation of Eunomius.[50] However, Troickij did address vital questions with regard to the status of the divine name, that is, as God-made or man-made, Divine energy or religious symbol, eternal or temporal, intrinsic or concomitant, and it is significant that some of his objections are incorporated in Ilarion Alfeev's recent compromise proposals.[51]

While the disputed passages in Ilarion's book offered a description of a devotional practice rather than a real theological stand, they provoked the heated discussions that drove Antonij Bulatovič to draft an onomatodox theory of the name. This made Sergej Troickij appeal to Gregory of Nyssa as a witness for the prosecution of *imjaslavie*. The Cappadocian's positions on the weakness of human thought and language before God became a weapon in the hands of the 'onomatoclasts', aimed at the defenders of a devotional

48 Leskin, *Spor ob imeni božiem* (cf. note 14), 92.137.

49 Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), 245.246.

50 Cf. Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), 242 et seq.

51 Two examples may be put forward: as regards the alleged eternity and divine origin of the names, Alfeev, *Le mystère sacré de l'Église* (cf. note 6), writes: "La thèse onomatodoxe contestée par Troïtski [...] [viz. the eternity of the divine names, esp. the name 'Jesus'—L.S.] peut être comprise dans un sens orthodoxe, comme la préexistence du Nom de Dieu au sein de la Providence Divine (*prognôsis*)" (243) and "Il aurait effectivement été plus juste de dire que Dieu a donné à l'homme la capacité de nommer, et l'homme a donné un nom à tout ce qui l'entoure, à tout ce avec quoi il se trouve en relation, y compris Dieu; par la suite, Dieu, en communiquant avec les hommes, a utilisé les noms inventés par l'homme et en a fait Ses outils, les foyers de la présence de Ses énergies" (243–244). Concerning the relation between the names and the divine energy, already touched upon in the above quotation, Alfeev has to conclude: "Si l'on souscrit à la conception palamite des énergies divines, où l'énergie est une action ontologiquement inhérente à Dieu de toute éternité, indissociable de l'essence divine, le Nom de Dieu ne peut être appelé énergie divine. Créé, le Nom de Dieu n'est pas co-éternel à Dieu, et ne peut être identifié à l'énergie incréée. Cependant, il peut être regardé comme le réceptacle de l'énergie divine, le porteur, le lieu de sa présence. Ainsi, la thèse onomatodoxe selon laquelle "le Nom de Dieu est énergie divine", n'est recevable que dans un contexte élargi, et non au sens propre de l'expression" (248).

practice that went back to age-old hesychasm and was grafted on a Palamite stem. Pressed between Troickij and Bulatovič, between the former's reading of Gregory of Nyssa and the latter's interpretation of Gregory Palamas, the debate proved sterile. According to some believers Troickij's erudite attempt to refute onomatodoxy on the basis of Gregory's arguments *Against Eunomius* only showed the learned canonist's inability to move beyond the darkness of Sinaï to embrace the uncreated light of Tabor.

À propos de l'infinité divine dans le débat trinitaire du *Contre Eunome* III : le noyau de la réfutation est-il philosophique ou bien scripturaire ?

Ovidiu Sferlea

Dans son magistral *Plato Christianus*, E. von Ivanka affirme que pour gagner le débat qui l'oppose à Eunome il a suffi à Grégoire de Nysse d'utiliser « un concept d'infini vraiment conséquent » sans par ailleurs faire grand cas des « considérations théologico-dogmatiques »[1]. Je vais essayer par la suite de mettre à l'épreuve cette thèse. Je ferai voir d'abord qu'il est difficile de deviner comment le concept de Dieu infini pouvait par lui-même regler la controverse eunomienne. Je montrerai ensuite que la façon concrète dont l'argumentation de Grégoire procède dévoile qu'au contraire le poids de sa réfutation est à chercher du côté de l'appel au texte biblique. Afin de faire encore mieux ressortir l'importance de la preuve biblique, je finirai par l'examen d'un texte du *Contre Eunome I* où, en raison du fait que le témoignage scripturaire n'est pas assuré, l'argument de Grégoire est beaucoup moins concluant.

I Le concept de Dieu infini et la solution au défi anti-trinitaire posé par Eunome

Essayons un exercice d'imagination. Eunome aurait-il pu, oui ou non, accepter l'infinité du Dieu inengendré ? Il me semble possible de répondre par l'affirmative[2]. D'abord, ce concept pourrait très bien passer pour un

1 E. von Ivanka, *Plato christianus. La réception critique du platonisme chez les pères de l'Église*, Paris 1990 (Einsiedeln 1964), 170 : « L'essentiel de cette réfutation est qu'elle n'use pas de considérations théologico-dogmatiques pour montrer ce qu'il y a d'intenable dans les doctrines d'Origène ou des Ariens : elle les bat pour ainsi dire avec leurs propres armes. En partant d'un concept d'infini vraiment conséquent, on exclut la possibilité d'une 'descente graduelle' et celle d'une 'divinité limitée', les idées ariennes et celles d'Origène se révèlent intenables ».

2 *Pace* R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000. R. P. Vaggione croit savoir qu'Aèce et d'Eunome n'auraient pas pu admettre l'idée d'infinité divine pour deux raisons. D'abord, le prédicat d'infini aurait évoqué dans leur esprit l'idée de désordre ("It seems to imply that God was chaotic »). Aucun texte d'Aèce ou d'Eunome n'est indiqué à l'appui de cette supposition. Ensuite, le concept de Dieu infini aurait détruit la correspondance entre ce Dieu et les mots finis destinés à le décrire (p. 168–172). Je ne suis pas sûr d'avoir

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« synonyme » de l'inengendré. On sait que pour Eunome tous les noms de Dieu doivent coïncider quant à leur sens avec celui d'« inengendré »[3]. L'« infini » ne poserait pas de problème particulier de ce point de vue. Après tout, rien n'est moins susceptible de devenir ou de génération que l'infini. L'infini *ne devient pas*, l'infini *est* (*cf.* Ex 3,14)[4]. Ensuite, les conséquences pour le reste de son système semblent quasiment nulles. En effet, le Fils n'en serait pas moins un γέννημα et un κτίσμα, un « produit » fini d'une activité finie (le « Père »)[5], alors que l'essence de Dieu resterait infiniment dans sa transcendance par rapport à toutes les créatures. Si l'infini produit un autre que lui-même, ce dernier sera vraisemblablement fini, à la ressemblance de l'activité qui le produit. Enfin, la règle de l'analogie serait gardée « en toutes choses »[6]. Il y aurait donc autant

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bien saisi le sens ce cette deuxième objection supposée. Je note en revanche qu'en *Apologie* 9 (SC 305, 250) Eunome affirme que l'inengendré « échappera à toute comparaison et à toute communauté avec l'engendré ». En d'autres mots, entre l'inengendré et l'engendré il y a une opposition radicale, absolue. Dès lors il semble difficile de montrer en quoi l'on ne pourrait pas remplacer le predicat d'"inengendré » par celui d' « infini ». D'un côté, au niveau de l'essence les entités ainsi qualifiées seraient aussi incomparables que l'inengendré et l'engendré. D'un autre côté, cela n'affecterait pas la possibilité d'avoir une « analogie » au niveau des qualités (cf. *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 173). Pour paraphraser R. P. Vaggione (p. 174), la notion de « lumière » appliquée au Fils et à Dieu, respectivement, ne donnerait pas une différence de type « ténèbres-lumière », mais de type « lumière finie-lumière infinie ». L'importance de l'idée d'infinité divine dans le débat trinitaire de Grégoire avec Eunome a été discutée par E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassichen Metaphysik*, FKDG 16, Göttingen 1966, 111–118. On trouvera un autre point de vue chez W. Ullmann, "Der logische und der theologische Sinn des Unendlichkeitsbegriffes in der Gotteslehre Gregors von Nyssa », *Bijdragen* 48 (1987) 150–171. Voir aussi K.-H. Uthemann, « Die Sprache der Theologie nach Eunomius von Cyzicus », *ZKG* 104 (1993) 143–175.

3 *Apologie* 19 (SC 272). Cf. *AA* apud *CE* II, 471. Voir B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du « Contre Eunome » avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Bruxelles 1994, 152–157. Voir aussi A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea : Gregory of Nyssa and the Transformation of divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009, 110–112.

4 Eunome oppose volontiers être et devenir. L'être au sens propre appartient exclusivement à l'Inengendré, alors que le Fils et les autres créatures sont relegués du côté du devenir. *Apologie* 13, (SC, 260) : « À celui qui est, qu'est-il besoin de génération ? » ; *AA* apud *CE* III 8, 34 : « (Le Fils) n'est pas, ni n'est au sens strict (κυρίως) » ; *AA* apud *CE* III 8, 43 « Car celui qui est et vit par le Père, ne s'approprie pas cette dignité, l'ousie qui le domine tirant à elle le concept de l'être (*cf. Ex* 3,14) ». La traduction des textes de l'*AA* est celle proposée par B. Pottier (*Dieu et le Christ*).

5 *AA* apud *CE* III, 7, 26. *Cf. Apologie* 23 (SC 280). Pour une discussion plus détaillée, voir Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 62 *sq*.

6 Eunome, *Apologie* 17 (SC 268).

de différence entre l'inengendré et l'engendré, entre « la lumière et la lumière, la vie et la vie, la puissance et la puissance »[7], comprendre : différence infinie. Il s'avère ainsi possible, me semble-t-il, de reproduire à partir de la notion d'infini l'argumentation subordinationniste qu'Eunome avait mise au point à partir de l'inengendré. Par ailleurs, j'attire l'attention sur le chap. 23 de l'*Apologie*. Eunome y explique la différence entre l'activité de Dieu et son essence. De la première il dit qu'elle a un commencement et une fin ("elle n'est pas sans commencement [...], elle n'est pas non plus sans fin »), alors qu'il en va tout autrement de l'essence de Dieu, qui est « sans commencement, simple et sans fin (ἄναρχον ἁπλῆν τε καὶ ἀτελεύτητον) »[8]. Serait-il déraisonnable d'y voir l'affirmation d'une forme d'infinité divine par Eunome ? Mais il ne faut peut-être pas trop tirer de ce texte[9].

Revenons maintenant à l'histoire pour noter que le prédicat de l'infinité avait été appliqué à Dieu par des adversaires de Nicée. Par exemple, le maître même d'Eunome, si toutefois la confession de foi d'Aèce que nous rapporte l'*Histoire « acéphale »* est fiable. Aèce y dit, en effet, que

> Dieu a en propre les caractères suivants : inengendré, sans commencement, éternel, soumis à aucune autorité, immuable, voyant tout, infini (*infinitum*), sans égal, tout-puissant, connaissant l'avenir sans avoir besoin de le prévoir, sans seigneurie[10].

7 Eunome, *Apologie* 19 (SC 272).

8 Eunome, *Apologie* 23 (SC 280). Basile ne cite pas ce texte.

9 Cependant, cf. *AA* apud *CE* II 469. Il semble que cette manière d'attribuer l'infinité à Dieu ait déjà été approchée dans les cercles hétéroousiens. R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God : The Arian Controversy. 318–381*, Edinburgh 1988, 604–605) relève, en relation avec la doctrine d'Aèce, quelques passages d'un « unknown writer or writers » cités par Georges de Laodicée dans une lettre préservée dans le *Panarion* d'Epiphane, 73. 21.2–5 (293–295). Dans un de ces passages, l'auteur fait le raisonnement suivant : « Si l'on admet que le Fils est infini (ἀτελεύτητος), non pas parce qu'il possède la vie par sa nature propre, mais par l'autorité de Celui qui est sans commencement (ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἀγενήτου ἐξουσίας), et que la nature sans commencement est infiniment plus grande que toute autorité (ἀτελευτήτως πάσης ἐξουσίας κρείττων), comment ne sont-ils manifestement impies ceux qui échangent la proclamation hétéroousienne de l'orthodoxie avec la similitude d'essence (ὁμοιότητι οὐσίας τὸ ἑτεροούσιον τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐναλλάττοντες κήρυγμα) ? » (ma traduction). L'auteur se rattache au courant hétéroousien d'Aèce et d'Eunome et il s'oppose à l'« impiété » des « homoiousiens » groupés autour de Basile d'Ancyre et Eustathe de Sébaste. La lettre de Georges est antérieure à l'*Apologie* d'Eunome.

10 *Histoire « Acéphale »* 4,4–6 (SC 317, 154).

Il est difficile de savoir quel sens il donnait au mot « infini »[11], mais vraisemblablement il ne modifiait pas son subordinationnisme radical, puisque le Dieu dont il parlait était « sans égal ».

Un deuxième exemple à cet égard nous est fourni par Grégoire de Nazianze. Dans le *Discours 31*, il passe en revue les différentes opinions sur la divinité du Fils et finit par évoquer celle de certains hérétiques qui

> mesurent la divinité ; ils admettent, comme nous, les trois que nous connaissons, mais ils ont mis entre eux une différence telle qu'ils présentent le premier comme infini (ἀόριστον) au point de vue de la substance et de la puissance, le second comme infini au point de vue de la puissance, mais non de la substance, et le troisième comme limité à ces deux points de vue[12].

Il est donc assez clair que l'affirmation de l'infinité divine pouvait s'accommoder au subordinationisme ou au monothéisme le plus strict. On peut parfaitement imaginer en effet comment un Dieu inengendré infini crée *ex nihilo* une série finie d'espèces de finis, s'il est permis de traduire dans ces termes la cosmologie d'Eunome. En revanche, on voit mal pourquoi un Dieu infini, du fait d'être infini, devrait être compris comme un Dieu trine. Pour être encore plus clair, on n'arrive pas à saisir ce qui dans la logique d'un « concept d'infini vraiment conséquent » pourrait nous amener à conclure à la trinité de Dieu – l'objectif de Grégoire. C'est qu'à l'évidence il n'y a pas de passage direct de la métaphysique du divin à la théologie trinitaire, comme la thèse d'E. von Ivanka semble trop facilement le supposer. Par lui-même, le concept d'un Dieu infini ne pouvait pas apporter la solution au problème trinitaire du IV^e^ siècle, car il se prêtait à un usage ambivalent. En sorte que la tâche, pour ceux qui défendaient l'héritage de Nicée, était donc non pas de simplement inventer ce concept,

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11 Dans la suite du texte, Aèce donne les caractères du Fils, qui sont à l'opposé de ceux de Dieu : « Celui-ci est soumis (au Père), sous son autorité, il est tiré du néant, il a une fin (*finem habet*), on ne peut le comparer (au Père), le Père, principe du Christ, le surpasse, il existe autant que cela dépend du Père, il ignore l'avenir . . . ». Malheureusement, il n'est pas possible d'établir avec certitude une correspondance exacte entre les caractères figurant dans les deux listes. Ainsi, par exemple, on peut penser que la séquence « inengendré, sans commencement, éternel » correspond à « il est tiré du néant, il a une fin ». *Infinitum* pourrait alors rendre les mots grecs ἀόριστον ou ἄπειρον. Mais on peut également imaginer que *infinitum* s'oppose à *finem habet* et dans ce cas il rendrait le grec ἀτελεύτητον. Difficile de trancher entre ces hypothèses.

12 *Discours* 31, 5 (SC 250, 284).

mais plutôt de l'apprivoiser en l'adaptant au sens du trinitarisme biblique. Hilaire de Poitiers, par exemple, s'en sert de cette manière ;[13] les subordinationnistes que cite Grégoire de Nazianze prennent la voie opposée. Comme on vient de le voir, Eunome se serait probablement placé du côté de ces derniers.

II La preuve par les Écritures et l'infinité divine dans le *CE* III

Au fond, ce qu'aux yeux de Grégoire Eunome refuse d'accepter, ce n'est pas l'infinité de Dieu, mais la vraie divinité du Christ (et de l'Esprit), et l'inflexion trinitaire qu'elle introduit dans le dispositif conceptuel d'un monothéisme strict. Cette nouveauté de l'Évangile, il veut la gommer par son insistance sur l'attribut d'inengendré qu'il identifie à l'essence même de Dieu. Comment Grégoire peut-il s'y opposer ? Certainement pas en affirmant directement l'infinité de Dieu, car de l'infinité de Dieu il ne peut pas déduire sa trinité. Il est en effet évident que Grégoire ne peut tirer un profit trinitaire de l'affirmation de l'infinité divine que s'il parvient par d'autres moyens à faire sortir le Fils et l'Esprit de la classe générale des κτίσματα dans laquelle Eunome est résolu à les maintenir. Trouver dans les Écritures des éléments qui rendent illégitime l'application des mots tels que κτίσμα ou ποίημα au Fils et à l'Esprit, voilà la tâche à laquelle Grégoire va donc s'ateler. Nous en prendrons un exemple du *Contre Eunome III*, mais il serait facile d'en ajouter d'autres[14].

Dans le *CE* III 6, 49–76, Grégoire affrontre une objection d'Eunome : « Le Fils n'était pas avant sa propre génération »[15]. Eunome admet l'éternité de Dieu (*i.e.* de l'Inengendré), mais nie la co-éternité du Fils. Voilà donc ce que Grégoire doit établir : la co-éternité du Fils. Or il s'y emploie non pas en nous livrant des considérations philosophiques, mais en indiquant les titres et les noms par lesquels l'Ecriture désigne le Fils : lumière, bénédiction, vie, vérité, puissance, sanctification, resplendissement de la gloire de Dieu, sagesse de Dieu etc. Il en conclut que ces expressions montrent que le Fils est part entière de ce que signifie être Dieu. Le Fils est corrélatif à Dieu, puisque la gloire ne peut être comprise en l'absence du resplendissement, pas plus que Dieu ne peut

13 Voir J. M. McDermott, « Hilary of Poitiers : The infinite Nature of God », *VigCh* 27 (1973) 172–202.

14 *E.g. CE* III 2,16–23 ; *CE* III 3,1–11 ; *CE* III 6,1–24 ; *CE* III 7,27–53.

15 *CE* III 6,43, repris au § 49.

être compris en l'absence de sa sagesse[16]. S'il persiste à nier l'éternité du Fils, Eunome est, selon Grégoire, obligé de nier aussi l'éternité de Dieu[17].

Mais Eunome a sans surprise une objection contre l'argument des corrélatifs[18]. Si le Fils Monogène est dit exister de toute éternité (ἐξ ἀϊδίου), en raison du fait qu'il est corrélatif à Dieu, il semble que l'on soit obligé d'affirmer la même conclusion à propos des choses créées. Il est certainement bien et agréable à Dieu de créer. Il a dû, par conséquent, créer de toute éternité. Pour éviter une telle conséquence, Eunome estime qu'il faut admettre pour le Fils un commencement semblable à celui des autres créatures, c'est-à-dire d'une façon ou d'une autre un commencement temporel.

La réponse de Grégoire consistera à montrer une fois de plus qu'il est illégitime de mettre sur le même plan la création et le maître de la création. Le Fils n'a en effet aucune parenté (οἰκειότητα) avec la création, comme les marques par lesquelles il se fait connaître le prouvent abondamment[19]. Et Grégoire de faire un tour de force scripturaire en relevant que la création n'était pas au commencement (*i.e.* au Père), n'était pas avec Dieu, n'était pas Dieu, ni vie, ni lumière, ni résurrection, vérité, justice, sanctification, juge juste, créateur de tout, existant d'avant les siècles, roi du siècle et après le siècle et au-delà encore, resplendissement de la gloire de Dieu, expression de son être et image de sa bonté, grâce, puissance, salut ; et il en vient aux expressions plus hautes encore de *Jn* 14,9–11 (« Celui qui m'a vu a vu le Père » ; « Je suis dans le Père et le Père est en moi »). Tous ces noms montrent sans nul doute que le Fils n'a rien de commun (κοινωνίαν) avec la nature de la création. Grégoire rappelle à ce point la division suprême des êtres en créés et incréés. Les premiers sont coétendus à l'ensemble des intervalles temporels (πᾶσι συμπαρατεινομένης τοῖς χρονικοῖς διαστήμασι). Limités des deux côtés (commencement et fin), ils ne sont pas éternels, comme c'est le cas pour la nature incréée qui dépasse toute limitation dans son infinité ([ἐν] τῷ ἀορίστῳ). Elle est sans extension, sans quantité et incirconscrite, transcendant l'immensité des siècles (τῆς τῶν αἰώνων ἀπειρίας) par son éternité (τῇ ἀϊδιότητι). Après cette mise au point, Grégoire estime qu'il ne reste à Eunome que deux possibilités. Ou bien il se résout à

16 *CE* III 6,51–53. J'appelle ce type d'argument l'argument des corrélatifs : si X, alors Y, car X suppose Y et *vice versa*.

17 L'argument des corrélatifs est traditionnel à partir d'Origène. Il avait été utilisé par Basile (*Adversus Eunomium* II, 2) et Grégoire le résume ainsi : s'il était bon pour le Père d'avoir un Fils, et qu'il veut toujours ce qui est bien, en sorte que rien de bon ne fait défaut à Dieu, le Fils est avec Dieu le Père de toute éternité (*CE* III 6,76).

18 *CE* III 6,57.

19 *CE* III 6,63.

contempler le Fils dans l'union avec l'éternité du Père, ou bien il persiste à assigner un commencement au Fils, introduisant de cette manière le temps dans la nature incréée. L'absurdité du deuxième choix est évidente par elle-même. Mais Eunome pourrait néanmoins essayer de l'éviter tout en continuant par ailleurs d'affirmer un commencement du Fils et en refusant de l'inclure dans le régime ontologique du Père. Après tout, on pourrait concéder que la vie du Fils s'étend à l'infini (εἰς τὸ ἀτελεύτητον παρατείνοντος), sans être pour autant de toute éternité (μήτε ἐξ ἀϊδίου). Le Fils serait comme les âmes et les anges, qui eux aussi, bien que créés et constitués à partir d'un commencement, ne sont par rien empêchés de continuer à exister dans l'éternité (εἰς τὸ ἀΐδιον). De cette façon, le Fils serait donc bien une créature « éternelle » au même titre que les anges et les âmes. L'objection, imaginée par lui-même, donne à Grégoire l'occasion d'éclairer encore plus la différence entre créé et incréé à partir d'une perspective nouvelle, celle de la participation[20]. Celui qui tiendrait ces propos en effet, se montrerait bien ignorant d'un autre aspect qui sépare la divinité de la création[21]. La différence dont il s'agit concerne le mode d'existence. Il y a, d'un côté, celui de Dieu qui est plénitude infinie de « biens ». Dieu ne doit pas sa vie, sa puissance, sa sagesse etc. à un processus de participation. Il est toutes ces perfections dans une mesure infinie, car elles ne sont pas bornées par leurs contraires. De l'autre côté, il y a le mode d'existence des créatures, chez lesquelles la vie, la puissance, la sagesse sont toujours un mélange variable de présence et d'absence, de vie et de mort, de puissance et d'impuissance, de sagesse et d'ignorance. Quel est donc le mode d'existence du Fils ? De manière évidente, celui de la plénitude infinie, comme l'Ecriture nous l'assure quand elle l'appelle « vie », « vraie lumière », « sagesse », « vérité » etc. Le Fils *est* toutes ces choses sur un mode infini, de même que le Père. Il ne peut donc pas être sujet d'une participation sans fin aux perfections divines, à l'instar des créatures[22].

III Un argument philosophique du *CE* I sans preuve scripturaire

Afin de mesurer à quel point le témoignage biblique est fondamental à l'argumentation de Grégoire, nous allons prendre maintenant un passage où

20 Notion fondamentale chez Grégoire, comme l'a amplement montré D. L. Balàs, *Μετουσία θεοῦ, Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to saint Gregory of Nyssa*, StAns 55, Roma 1966. Cf. idem, « Metousia », in : L. F. Mateo-Seco, G. Maspero (ed.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden 2010, 500–501.

21 *CE* III 6,74.

22 *CE* III 6,75. Cf. *CE* I 290–291.

ce témoignage est absent. Il s'agit de *CE* I 167–171. Comme dans le passage du *CE* III que nous venons d'étudier, le contexte du *CE* I, 167–171 est trinitaire. Grégoire y affronte une thèse fondamentale d'Eunome, selon laquelle le Fils et l'Esprit Saint sont inférieurs au Père quant à leur οὐσία et à leurs ἐνέργειαι. Il y a, d'un côté, un sommet du bien, de la puissance etc., qu'Eunome appelle « l'οὐσία suprême et absolue », l'essence divine elle-même ; il y a, d'un autre côté, d'autres οὐσίαι qui possèdent ces qualités sous un mode partiel ou dérivé, c'est pourquoi elles viennent « après celle-là ». Grégoire cherche à montrer au contraire qu'il n'y a pas lieu de faire cette distinction et qu'il n'y a pas de degrés dans la divinité, car les perfections du Père, du Fils et de l'Esprit Saint sont infinies les unes au même titre que les autres.

> Il est connu de tout un chacun [...] que l'hypostase du Fils Monogène et celle de l'Esprit Saint ne comportent aucun manque au regard de la perfection de leur bonté ou de leur puissance ou de quelque autre qualité de ce genre. Tous les biens, en effet, tant qu'ils sont incapables de leurs contraires, ne comportent pas de limite pour leur bonté, puisque seuls leurs contraires peuvent les circonscrire. [...] Si donc il suppose que la nature du Monogène et de l'Esprit Saint peut changer pour le pire, il diminue, selon toute vraisemblance, la notion de leur bonté, puisqu'il prétend qu'ils sont capables de leur contraire. Mais si la nature divine est immuable et incapable d'aller vers le pire – et cela ce sont nos adversaires mêmes qui le confessent – nous devons la regarder comme absolument illimitée dans le bien. Mais l'illimité, c'est la même chose que l'infini. Or c'est le comble de l'absurde que de concevoir un « plus » et un « moins » de l'infini et de l'illimité. Comment la notion d'infini resterait-elle valide alors, si l'on imaginait qu'il y a du « plus » et du « moins » en elle ? L'idée de « plus », en effet, nous l'obtenons par la comparaison des limites. Mais dans le cas de ce qui n'a pas de limite, comment concevrait-on un « plus » ?[23]

Nous passerons sur la manière de poser formellement ici l'infinité de Dieu[24] pour nous demander ce que vaut cette démonstration pour l'argument trinitaire que Grégoire veut diriger contre Eunome. Or il n'y a qu'à regarder attentivement le texte pour s'apercevoir qu'il contient une *petitio* qu'Eunome n'aurait probablement pas accordée, à savoir que le Fils et l'Esprit Saint « ne

23 *CE* I 167–171.

24 On trouvera une analyse chez Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes*, 118–122. Pour un point de vue différent, voir Th. Böhm, *Theoria – Unendlichkeit – Aufstieg. Philosophische Implikationen zu* De Vita Moysis *von Gregor von Nyssa*, SVigChr 35, Leiden 1996, 124–134.

comportent aucun manque au regard de la perfection de leur bonté ou de leur puissance ou de quelque autre qualité de ce genre ». « Il est connu par tout un chacun », dit Grégoire. « Par tout un chacun » en effet, sauf par Eunome. La réflexion d'Eunome à partir de l'inengendré diminuait précisément, pour le Fils et l'Esprit, « la notion de leur bonté ». Puisqu'il n'y a donc pas accord sur cette prémisse, la démonstration de l'infinité des hypostases divines perd beaucoup de sa valeur conclusive pour l'argument trinitaire que Grégoire veut articuler. On a même l'impression que la structure générale de sa réfutation court le risque de circularité.

De manière schématique, la position que Grégoire veut établir est l'égalité des hypostases trinitaires. À cette fin, il suppose que la bonté de chacune de ces trois hypostases est absolue. L'hypostase du Fils et de l'Esprit Saint possèdent toutes les qualités du Père en propre (κυρίως), il n'y a pas de différence entre ces hypostases et leur bonté, leur puissance etc. Le Fils et l'Esprit *sont* la bonté, la puissance etc. Mais on voit facilement que de cette façon leur égalité avec le Père est acquise, car s'ils possèdent les qualités que possède le Père et sur le même mode que lui (*i.e.* sans manque), il n'y a plus moyen de les distinguer d'un point de vue ontologique du Père et il faut affirmer leur identité d'οὐσία – cela même qui était à montrer. La démonstration qui suit part déjà du postulat de l'égalité qu'elle ne fait que confirmer. Réduit à l'essentiel, l'argument se déploie donc selon la séquence suivante : la bonté de chacune de trois hypostases est absolue, i.e. identique dans chaque cas : Père, Fils et Esprit Saint ; mais si elle est absolue, elle est infinie ; mais si elle est infinie, elle est identique dans chaque cas : Père, Fils et Saint Esprit ; il est donc absurde de parler d'un « plus » ou d'un « moins » ; en effet, il y a égalité (dans l'infinité).

À supposer qu'Eunome n'ait pas accepté la *petitio* de Grégoire, on aurait pu encore avoir la même démonstration de l'infinité divine. Mais elle n'aurait pu établir que l'infinité du Père. Or établir l'infinité du Père seul n'aurait que mieux conforté la position subordinationniste d'Eunome. Ou, pour le dire autrement, l'affirmation de l'infinité divine par Grégoire n'aurait pas eu de signification trinitaire.

Pour que l'argument ne soit pas circulaire et qu'il puisse conduire à la conclusion trinitaire qu'envisage Grégoire, il devrait contenir un florilège de textes bibliques (comme celui du *CE* III 6, 49–76) qui montrent que le Fils et l'Esprit Saint « ne comportent aucun manque au regard de la perfection de leur bonté ou de leur puissance ou de quelque autre qualité de ce genre ». Mais ce florilège est absent de la discussion. Aussi l'argument ne semble-t-il pas avoir la force que Grégoire veut lui donner[25].

25 On a souvent dit qu'Eunome enseignait une divinité scalaire, qui va du Père à l'Esprit en se dégradant. Il me semble pourtant que cette vue, qui provient d'une lecture trinitaire

Conclusion

À la lumière de ces considérations, il apparaît pour le moins problématique d'affirmer que la réfutation de Grégoire, dans ce qu'elle a de plus propre, « n'use pas de considérations théologico-dogmatiques », mais repose sur un « concept d'infini vraiment conséquent ». Soutenir une telle affirmation, c'est manifestement ne pas voir que de la métaphysique du divin (Dieu est infini) à la théologie trinitaire (le Fils et l'Esprit sont Dieu au même titre que le Père) le passage ne peut se faire sans médiation. Du besoin de cette médiation Grégoire est, lui, parfaitement conscient. Il fait donc de son mieux pour y subvenir précisément par l'appel à des « considérations théologico-dogmatiques », si du moins on peut entendre par là l'exégèse des Écritures et les arguments traditionnels qui sont en rapport étroit avec elle. Dans les endroits du *CE III* où elle fait usage de l'idée d'infinité divine, la réfutation de Grégoire procède selon un modèle dont les variations ne sont pas significatives. Il s'agit à chaque fois d'une séquence logique en trois temps : 1) affirmer l'infinité divine ou l'infinité du Père. Parfois Grégoire en donne une démonstration formelle, parfois il la suppose connue et acceptée, ou encore il l'attribue aux Écritures ; 2) établir l'appartenance du Fils et de l'Esprit à la sphère divine et incréée. Pour y parvenir, Grégoire

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d'Eunome, ne correspond pas à sa pensée. Eunome ne raisonne jamais dans un paradigme trinitaire, même si son langage peut en donner parfois l'impression (e.g. *AA* apud *CE* I 151–154). Pour lui, il n'y a qu'un seul Dieu, c'est le Créateur inengendré. Le reste, ce sont des créatures, à commencer par la plus éminente, le Fils. Si le Fils est appelé « Dieu » par Eunome (*Apologie* 15, 21, 26 etc.), il ne faut pas s'y méprendre. Cette appellation doit être comprise non pas au sens où il y aurait une continuité ontologique, éventuellement scalaire, entre le Fils et l'Inengendré, car le Fils appartient à la classe générale des κτίσματα qui par nature n'ont rien de commun avec l'Inengendré (cf. *Apologie* 9, SC 250). « Dieu », le Fils l'est en tant qu'il exerce à l'égard de tous les êtres la causalité créatrice qui lui a été déléguée par l'Inengendré. Sa « divinité » est donc non pas ontologique, mais fonctionnelle ; elle est due à son ministère démiurgique (voir *AA* apud *CE* III 9,27). Il est évident que la tâche la plus ardente de Grégoire est de montrer, par le biais indispensable des témoignages bibliques, que le Fils appartient à la sphere incrée, qu'il est Dieu par son οὐσία et non pas simplement par son ἐνέργεια. C'est à partir de cette base seulement que le recours à l'infinité divine comme argument contre l'idée d'une divinité ammoindrie du Fils peut porter. L'argument de Grégoire : Il y a une seule divinité. Or le Fils en fait partie, comme l'Écriture le prouve. Mais la divinité est infinie. Il est donc absurde de dire qu'un infini (le Père) est plus grand qu'un autre infini (le Fils). L. Karfiková décrit de manière semblable l'argument de Grégoire, mais ne fait pas mention du rôle que le témoignage biblique y tient, capital à mon sens. L. Karfiková, « Infinity », in : L. F. Mateo-Seco, G. Maspero (ed.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden 2010, 423–426, ici 424.

s'appuie constamment et massivement sur le témoignage inspiré des Écritures. Il est vrai que parfois il fait appel à des moyens qui sont extra-scripturaires (e.g. l'argument des corrélatifs : « Le nom de « Père » implique celui de « Fils » ; la « gloire » implique le « resplensdissement », etc.). Ces arguments sont néanmoins fortement dépendants de la valeur que l'on est prêt à donner aux métaphores scripturaires (le langage « Père-Fils », la métaphore du resplendissement, de l'empreinte etc.) ; 3) affirmer l'infinité du Fils et de l'Esprit à partir des mêmes bases (simplicité et caractère adiastatique ; parfois c'est à partir d'une référence scripturaire). On voit aisément que dans cette séquence le point décisif pour l'objectif trinitaire de Grégoire est 2) et qu'en son absence il ne peut pas tirer un profit trinitaire de l'affirmation de l'infinité divine.

Mehr als schöner Schein—Rhetorische Bildung als konstitutives Element von Theologie am Beispiel der überlieferten Briefe Gregors von Nyssa

Fabian Sieber

Einleitung

Die Aussage Gregor von Nyssa sei von der antiken Kultur und Bildung seiner Zeit stark geprägt, ist ein Gemeinplatz.[1] Unzweifelhaft hat er eine hervorragende Ausbildung in Rhetorik erhalten—ob nun ausschließlich durch seinen Bruder Basilius oder doch auch durch andere Lehrer sei dahingestellt. Es steht außer Frage, dass in seiner Zeit rhetorische Bildung eine conditio sine qua non für eine gehobene Laufbahn darstellte, in der paganen Welt des Römischen Reiches, wie in der christlichen Kirche. Wenn er eine entsprechende Laufbahn wählen konnte, so nur weil ihm der formale Bildungshintergrund zur Verfügung stand. Im konkreten Fall Gregors ermöglichten ihm seine Fähigkeiten anlässlich verschiedener Gelegenheiten auf der Bühne der ‚Großen Geschichte' zu bestehen und eine große Öffentlichkeitswirkung zu erzielen. So im Verlauf des Konzils von Konstantinopel, während dem er sich kirchenpolitisch exponierte oder wenn er die Trauerrede zu Ehren der verstorbenen Kaiserin Pulcheria halten durfte und dabei (als Kirchlicher Amtsträger) öffentlich hervortrat. Griechische παιδεία und Christlicher Glaube bildeten in diesem Zusammenhang eine untrennbare Einheit. Gregors Schriften bezeugen in ihrer Einheit von christlichem Inhalt und rhetorisch-stilistischer Form wie untrennbar verbunden beide Vorstellungswelten faktisch waren. Trotzdem ist eine Darstellung, die das Verhältnis von antiker Kultur und biblisch-christlicher Botschaft als Gegensatzpaar bestimmt noch immer weithin praktiziert. So beginnt etwa Krolikowskis Artikel im Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa zum Stichwort παιδεία mit der Feststellung: „παιδεία in a generic sense is an interpretation of the biblical faith wich developed in contrast to the representations of the ancient cultural ideals."[2] Grundsätzlich setzt diese

1 Vgl. etwa A. Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa*, London 1999, 6–15.

2 J. Krolikowski, „παιδεία", in: L. F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, SVigChr 99, Leiden 2010, 568–575, hier 568. Die These vom Gegensatz zwischen paganer literarischer Form und christlichem Inhalt fand auch prominent Eingang

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Perspektive ein Geschichtsbild voraus, das auf der Annahme basiert, dass das Kerygma von Leben, Tod und Auferstehung Jesu bereits in der Frühzeit der Kirche in ein umfassendes theologisches und ethisches System eingebettet war, das als solches in einen Gegensatz zur antik-paganen Philosophie und den Lebensvollzügen antik-paganer Gesellschaft treten konnte und musste. Die geistesgeschichtliche Entwicklung erscheint so als ein linearer Verlauf mit latent deterministischen Zügen.[3] So klar in dieser Perspektive die Schlagschatten zwischen antik-paganer Welt und Christlicher Kirche erscheinen, so wenig gelingt es aus ihr heraus die konkreten überlieferten Zeugnisse der christlich-patristischen Kultur zu interpretieren. Dies gilt natürlich für Werk und Person Gregors von Nyssa: Während man seine Teilhabe an der griechischen παιδεία als Beispiel für die Hellenisierung des Christentums lesen müsste, gälte es gleichzeitig die christlichen Glaubensinhalte die unzweifelhaft von Gregor propagiert wurden[4] von ihren Ausdrucksformen zu trennen, um auf diese Weise an der Unterscheidung zwischen antik-paganem und Christlichem Leben festhalten zu können. Dieser Zustand ist wenig befriedigend und zeigt, dass noch immer ein mindestens begrifflicher Klärungsbedarf besteht, wie sich christliche Botschaft in antiker Gesellschaft entfaltet hat. Die in diesem Beitrag gewählte Perspektive setzt voraus, dass der angenommene Kontrast zwischen Antiker Kultur und Christlicher Kirche, bzw. zwischen antik-paganer παιδεία und christlicher Theologie so nicht existiert hat.

An Hand von Person und Werk Gregor von Nyssas, wie es im Zeugnis seiner Briefe zu Tage tritt, soll im Folgenden ein entsprechender Klärungsversuch unternommen werden. Ausgangspunkt und Ziel der Darstellung wird es sein, am Beispiel Gregors rhetorischer Bildung aufzuzeigen, in welchen wechselseitigen Abhängigkeitsverhältnissen dabei christliche Verkündigung und antik-pagane Vorstellungswelten standen. Dabei wird deutlich werden, dass sich die sprachliche Form derer sich Gregor bediente, nicht in ihrer rheto-

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in C. Klock, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Rhythmus bei Gregor von Nyssa: Ein Beitrag zum Rhetorikverständis der griechischen Väter*, BKP 173, Frankfurt 1987, 79.

3 Erst aus einer solchen Position heraus wird es möglich, etwa eine Dogmengeschichte im klassischen Sinn zu schreiben, in der zeitlich frühere theologische Entwürfe an Hand von zeitlich späteren lehramtlichen Aussagen gemessen werden. Unausgesprochen rekuriert eine solche Herangehensweise auf das Konstrukt einer Arkandisziplin, das im konfessionellen Zeitalter geprägt wurde.

4 Gegen Ansätze, wie sie etwa von Apostolopoulos vertreten werden, die die Reflexionen der Kirchenväter auf ihre klassisch-philosophischen Implikationen reduzieren- vgl. vgl. etwa Ch. Apostolopoulos, *Phaedo Christianus, Studien zur Verbindung und Abwägung des Verhältnisses zwischen dem platonischen „Phaidon" und dem Dialog Gregors von Nyssa „Über die Seele und die Auferstehung"*, EHS, Reihe 20, Philosophie 188, Frankfurt 1985.

rischen Funktion erschöpft hat, sondern einen eigenen Bedeutungsinhalt transportiert. In einem ersten Schritt soll die kulturell-politische Dimension des Themas und der Kontext, in dem sich Gregors rhetorische Praxis bewegte an Hand von Gregors Wunsch beleuchtet werden, eine Laufbahn als Rhetor einzuschlagen. Dieser Abschnitt gewährt gleichzeitig Aufschlüsse über den kulturellen Kontext, in den Gregors Werk eingeordnet werden muss. In einem zweiten Schritt soll das Zeugnis der Briefe dahingehend untersucht werden, in welcher Weise Gregor am kulturellen Leben seiner Zeit Anteil nahm, welchen Einfluss seine rhetorische Bildung auf sein Denken und Schreiben ausübte und welche Folgen dieser Bildung für sein theologisches Denken gehabt hat. Natürlich sind für dieses Programm nicht alle Briefe von der gleichen Relevanz. Im Rahmen dieser Untersuchung soll deshalb nur eine Auswahl der unter dem Namen Gregors überlieferten Briefe betrachtet werden. Ausgewählt wurden die Briefe Nr. 20, sowie Nr. 26 und Nr. 27 der Pasquali-Sammlung wegen ihrer großen Verpflichtung gegenüber den rhetorischen Konventionen. Die Briefe Nr. 1 und Nr. 17 illustrieren das Selbstverständnis Gregors im Hinblick auf seine Stellung in der Gesellschaft—und der Wert rhetorischer Bildung für die Repräsentation in der Öffentlichkeit. Die Briefe Nr. 15 und Nr. 29 gewähren Einblick wie Gregor sein öffentliches Auftreten vorbereitete und wie er dabei natürlich auch wirkungsästhetische Überlegungen mitberücksichtigte. Nicht berücksichtigt wurde etwa der Briefwechsel Gregors mit Libanius (Briefe Nr. 13 und 14). Nicht weil die Authentizität dieser Schreiben umstritten ist und diskutiert wird,[5] sondern weil durch den Verzicht Doppelungen mit der Untersuchung des Briefwechsels zwischen Gregor und Stagirius (Briefe Nr. 26 und Nr. 27) vermieden werden. Ein Briefwechsel dessen Zuordnung an Gregor ebenfalls nicht unumstritten ist.[6] Eine Beurteilung der Authentizität soll an dieser Stelle jedoch vermieden werden, nicht zuletzt weil das Hauptaugenmerk in dieser Untersuchung nicht auf der Rekonstruktion der persönlichen Biographie Gregors von Nyssa liegt, sondern seine Person, sein Leben und seine Autorschaft vorrangig paradigmatisch und im Hinblick auf eine Verhältnisbestimmung zwischen griechisch-paganer Kultur und antik-christlicher Kultur betrachtet wird.

5 Vgl. dazu überblicksartig die Einleitungskapitel von P. Maraval (ed.), *Grégoire de Nysse, Lettres*, SC 363, Paris 1990, und A. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa, The letters*, SVigChr 83, Leiden 2007.

6 So finden sich die entsprechenden Briefe nicht nur im Corpus der Gregor von Nyssa zugeschriebenen Briefe, sondern unter Nr. 347 und Nr. 348 gleicherweise in jenem des Basilius von Caesarea, *Basilius von Caesarea: Briefe*, 3 Bände, Stuttgart 1973–1993.

1 Der Kontext: Gregor als Rhetor

Gregors Entschluss eine Laufbahn als Rhetor einzuschlagen scheint in die Jahre nach 362[7] gefallen zu sein. Bemerkenswert ist diese Entscheidung, da zu diesem Zeitpunkt die Regentschaft Kaiser Julians gerade erst beendet war, bzw. vielleicht auch noch andauerte. In eine Zeit also in der Fragen der Kultur politisch instrumentalisiert wurden, um religiös-kulturellen Präferenzen des Hofes Rechnung zu tragen. Dies zeigt sich insbesondere in Julians so genannten Rhetorenedikt. Der Kaiser hatte darin den Beruf des Lehrers dahingehend definiert, dass zu seiner Ausübung zunächst ein sittlicher Lebenswandel und erst danach Sprachgewandtheit[8] erforderlich seien. In einem Brief, der im Kontext dieses Edikts zu stehen scheint, interpretierte er dies dahingehend, dass deshalb Christen nicht den Beruf des Lehrers ausüben könnten. Er führt aus:

> Halten sie [die Rhetorik-Lehrer] die für Weise, deren Interpreten sie sind [die klassischen Autoren] und als deren Propheten sie sozusagen thronen, dann sollen sie zuerst ihrer Ehrfurcht vor den Göttern nacheifern; nehmen sie hingegen von ihnen an, daß sie in ihrer Auffassung von den verehrunswürdigen Wesen geirrt haben, dann sollen sie in die Kirchen der Galiläer gehen, um den Matthäus und Lukas auszulegen, deren Weisung folgend euer Gesetz die Teilnahme am Opfermahl untersagt.[9]

Die Folgen dieser Bildungspolitik, die bemüht war kulturelle Ausdrucksformen mit einer religiösen Konnotation zu versehen und die in dieser Hinsicht eine traditionelle christliche Bildungskritik bestätigte,[10] scheinen—auch bedingt durch den frühen Tod des Kaisers—eher begrenzt gewesen zu sein.[11] Dies dürfte zum Zeitpunkt, als Gregor von Nyssa seine rhetorische Ausbildung

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7 Die Datierung leitet sich von Brief 11 des Gregor von Nazianz ab, der an Gregor von Nyssa gerichtet ist. Zur Chronologie der Briefe des Gregor von Nazianz vgl. P. Gallay, *Gregor von Nazianz: Briefe*, GCS, Berlin 1969, XV.

8 „[…] moribus primum, deinde facundia." Codex Theodosianus XIII,3,5 (vom 17.6.362).

9 Julian ep.61c (B. Weis, *Julian: Briefe*, München 1973). Bemerkenswert ist das Schreiben, da es offenbar davon ausgeht, dass die adressierten Lehrer dem Christlichen Glauben anhängen, da es impliziert, dass den Angeredeten die Teilnahme an heidnischen Opfermahlen durch ‚ihr' Gesetz untersagt sei.

10 Vgl. P. Gemeinhardt, „Dürfen Christen Lehrer sein", *JAC* 51 (2008) 25–43, bes. 26–30.

11 Für eine kurze Analyse der überlieferten Zeugnisse, die auf das Rhetorenedikt zurückgehen siehe: Gemeinhardt, Dürfen Christen Lehrer sein, 37–39.

erhielt jedoch noch nicht in dieser Form klar gewesen sein. Wenn Gregor also die Absicht verfolgte, seine Rhetorik-Studien sogar noch zu vertiefen, so scheint er damit paradigmatisch die Paradoxität antik-christlicher Existenz zu veranschaulichen: aus der Mitte der antiken Gesellschaft heraus, polemische Fundamentalkritik gegen etablierte Institutionen eben dieser Gesellschaft—und insbesondere den paganen Götterhimmel—zu üben. Von außen betrachtet hätte der zeitweilig von Gregor verfolgte Plan eine säkulare Laufbahn einzuschlagen, dementsprechend auch als eine Konversion (zur Philosophie) gedeutet[12] und in der polemisch aufgeheizten Stimmung der Zeit gegen die Position der Christen ins Feld geführt werden können. So erstaunt es nicht, dass im Werk des Gregor von Nazianz ein wohl an Gregor von Nyssa adressierter Brief überliefert ist, in dem die These aufgestellt wird, dass es schlicht nicht möglich sei gleichzeitig Christ und Rhetor zu sein,[13] weshalb er ihn inständig auffordert statt mit der Kirche zu brechen, seine Berufspläne aufzugeben. Hierbei ist unbedingt festzuhalten, dass das Unbehagen das Gregor von Nazianz formuliert kein Votum gegen die klassisch-antiken Bildungsinhalte darstellt, denn diesen bringt er große Hochschätzung entgegen.[14] Viel eher ist es als ein politisch-kulturelles Votum zu deuten, das auf das aktuelle Verhältnis von christlichen und paganen Kulturträgern zugeschnitten ist. In einem zweiten Schritt lässt sich aus dem Votum Gregors von Nazianz vielleicht auch die Befürchtung ablesen, Gregor von Nyssa könne—sollte er wirklich eine weltliche Laufbahn einschlagen—der Kirche und damit der antiarianischen Partei in Kappadokien verloren gehen. Eine ernsthafte Antipathie gegenüber Stand und Beruf des Rhetors ist tatsächlich unwahrscheinlich und faktisch auszuschließen.[15]

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12 Da mit diesem Schritt nicht notwendig eine Neuformulierung der religiösen Selbstzuordnung verbunden gewesen wäre, hätte dieser Schritt aus der Innenperspektive wohl allenfalls eine Alternation bedeutet. Vgl. R. Travisano, „Alternation and Conversion as Qualitatively Different Tranformations", in: G. P. Stone Farberman—A. Harvey (eds.), *Social Psychology through Symbolic Interaction*, New York ²1981.

13 Vgl. Gregor von Nazianz, *Ep.*11 (M. Wittig, *Gregor von Nazianz: Briefe*, BGrL 13, Stuttgart 1981.

14 In seiner gegen Julian gerichteten Oratio 4 schreibt er: „Obwohl die Literatur allen vernünftigen Wesen gemeinsam ist, mißgönnte sie Julian, gerade als wenn sie sein persönliches Eigentum gewesen wäre, den Christen. Er, der sich einbildete, der allervernünftigste zu sein, dachte am unvernünftigsten über die Literatur." (Gregor von Nazianz: *Oratio* 4,4).

15 Zur Frage des Verhältnisses der Kappadokier zur griechischen Bildung, wie zur Praxis der Rhetorik siehe die grundlegende Untersuchung von: C. Klock, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Rhythmus*, 90–121.

Die kulturelle Praxis der Zeit dürfte, unabhängig von aller christlichen und paganen Polemik, überwiegend von einer wechselseitigen Anerkennung der jeweiligen kulturellen und literarischen Leistungen geprägt gewesen sein. Hierbei rezipierten die Christlichen Kulturträger nicht nur die paganen Methoden, Formen und Inhalte, sondern die paganen Kulturträger zeigten sich in gleicher Weise auch wohlwollend gegenüber den christlichen Beiträgen zum kulturellen Leben. Exemplarisch lässt sich dies am agieren Kaiser Julians zeigen, bei dem die öffentliche Ablehnung der christlichen Kultur mit einer faktischen Anerkennung und Rezeption eben dieser Kultur korrespondierte.[16] So stand Julian selbst in einem regen Austausch etwa mit seinem einstigen Kommilitonen Basilius von Caesarea. Es ist ein Brief erhalten,[17] in dem er diesen einlädt ihn zu besuchen. Julian versucht seinen Adressaten dabei davon zu überzeugen, dass ihn die Regierungsgeschäfte nicht zu sehr in Anspruch nehmen, um auch noch einen Gast zu empfangen. Um die Reise zu ermöglichen gewährt er ihm das Privileg für eine Besuchs-Reise die staatliche Post benützen zu dürfen.[18]—Und Basilius war keineswegs der einzige Theologe, dem die Ehre einer solchen Einladung zu Teil wurde. In gleicher Weise umwarb Julian auch Aetius von Antiochien, den Lehrer des Eunomius.[19] Das Interesse Julians an christlicher Kultur war jedoch nicht auf seinen persönlichen Freundeskreis beschränkt, sondern erstreckte sich natürlich auch auf die christlichen, literarischen Werke. So wies er nach dem Tod seines einstigen Lehrers und Erziehers, Georgs von Kappadokien, den Präfekten von Ägypten Ecdikius an, dessen Bibliothek sicher zu stellen.[20] Er gibt zu erkennen, dass er „wenn nicht alle so doch viele" der Bücher Georgs kennt, denn: „als ich mich in Kappadokien befand hat er mir etliche zur Anfertigung einer Abschrift überlassen und sie danach wieder zurückerhalten."[21] Während er sich in diesem Schreiben noch dafür entschuldigt, dass er sich neben den philosohpischen

16 Wesentlich kritischer interpretiert Meredith das Verhältnis Julians zum Christentum und die christliche Reaktionen auf Julians Kulturpolitik. Vgl. A. Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 9f. Eine differenzierte Interpretation erfährt die religiös-kulturelle Sozialisation Julians bei I. Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Konversion zur Philosophie in der Spätantike: Kaiser Julian und Synesios von Kyrene*, Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 23, Stuttgart 2008, 70–84.

17 Vgl. Julian, *Ep*. 32.

18 Ebd.

19 Vgl. Julian, *Ep.* 46.

20 Gegen die Interpretation von G. W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate*, London 1978, 80, der lediglich betont, dass Julian, indem er von einer Bestrafung der Täter abgesehen hat, seine Antipathie gegenüber den Christen zum Ausdruck gebracht hat.

21 Julian, *Ep*. 107.

und rhetorischen Schriften auch für die „Arbeiten über die Lehre der gottlosen Galiläer“ interessiert,[22] ist von dieser Zurückhaltung in seinem Schreiben an den Leiter der ägyptischen Finanzverwaltung, Parphyrius, den er ebenfalls auffordert die Bibliothek sicherzustellen, nichts mehr zu bemerken. Ihm teilt er lediglich mit:

> Georgios besaß eine reichhaltige, bedeutende Bibliothek von Werken der verschiedensten Philosophien, vieler Interpretatoren, besonders aber auch die verschiedenartigsten Schriften der Galiläer in großer Zahl. Spüre diese Bibliothek lückenlos auf [...].[23]

Und um den Verbleib der Bücher zu erfahren, soll Parphyrius, wenn nötig, auch vom Mittel der Folter Gebrauch machen. Diese Beispiele zeigen, dass erklärte Hellenen den Christen längst nicht so viel Verachtung entgegen brachten, wie sie öffentlich behaupteten. Im Fall Kaiser Julians lässt dies im weiteren vielleicht auch die These zu, dass die Begnadigung arianischer Bischöfe die er gewöhrte—und unter ihnen Eunomius von Kyzikos—, keineswegs nur dem Wunsch entsprang, die innerkirchlichen Konflikte zu verschärfen und sich am Gezänk der Theologen zu erfreuen.[24] Vielmehr lässt dieses Vorgehen auf eine tatsächliche Neigung schließen, die in seiner Erziehung durch Georg von Kappadokien begründet lag und durch seine Hochachtung gegenüber der παιδεία,[25] bestärkt wurde. Sein Wohlwollen wurde demnach allen Werken zuteil, die dieser Tradition verpflichtet waren, ob sie sich mit heiligen oder profanen Themen befassten und ob sie (pagan) philosophisch oder christlich (philosophisch) geprägt waren.

Gewendet auf Gregor, den Hauptprotagonisten dieser Untersuchung, muss sein Wunsch Rhetor zu werden dann nicht länger als Ausdruck und Resultat einer spirituellen Krise interpretiert werden.[26] Vielmehr scheint eine Interpretation möglich, die diesen Schritt als eine tatsächliche Option im Lebensweg Gregors würdigt. Eine Option, die weit mehr mit Fragen der Berufswahl verknüpft gewesen zu sein scheint, als mit Fragen der Berufung. Gregor war Christ und als solcher ein gebildeter und von seinen Zeitgenossen

22 Vgl. ebd.

23 Julian, *Ep*. 106.

24 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XXII, 5.

25 Vgl. die Erklärung dieses Begriffs im Denken Julians durch P. Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism. An Intellectual Biography*, Oxford 1981, 121–160.

26 Vgl. zu dieser Motivation die Darstellung von A. M. Silvas, „Introduction“, in: Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 12–15, bes. 13.

geschätzter Mensch der Kultur, dem alle Möglichkeiten offen gestanden haben eine weltliche oder krichliche Karriere zu beginnen. Natürlich blieb dies, nachdem Gregor zum Bischof geweiht wurde, Teil seiner Biographie. Er war sich weltlicher Gepflogenheiten nicht nur bewusst, sondern konnte sie schätzen und war bemüht Konventionen zu erfüllen—nicht nur, wo es nötig, sondern auch, wo es möglich war.

Versteht man die unter dem Namen Gregors überlieferten Briefe weder als (Kunst-) Epistel noch als (persönliche-) Briefe[27] sondern als ‚Freundschaftsbriefe', die—in der Definition Thraedes—„weder ‚rein' literarische Form noch ‚rein' sprudelnde Natürlichkeit, sondern persönlich gefärbte Konvention und gesellschaftlich stilisierte Individualität"[28] ausdrücken, so liegt es nahe sich zunächst und vor allem mit diesen Werken zu beschäftigen. In ihrem Ringen mit Konvention, literarischer Form und der jeweiligen Aussageabsicht bilden sie eine Art Miniatur, die als abgeschlossener, literarischer Kurztext Einblick in das Verhältnis des Briefschreibers zu seiner (kulturellen) Umwelt gewährt. Sie sind Ausdruck der untrennbaren Verbundenheit zwischen griechischer παιδεία und christlichem Glauben, die in der Spätantike empfunden und gelebt wurde.

2 Die Briefe

2.1 *Gregor als Homme de lettres*

Fast paradigmatisch hierfür, steht Brief Nr. 20 der Pasquali-Sammlung, ein bemerkenswertes Schreiben Gregors, das seit langem die Aufmerksamkeit der Forschung erregt hat.[29] Gregor dankt darin dem Gelehrten Adelphius, dem späteren (nach 392) Consularis Galatiae, dafür, dass er dessen Landgut Vanota besuchen durfte. Irritierend ist, dass der Brief nahezu ausschließlich aus einer Ekphrasis des von Gregor besuchten Gutes und der umliegenden Landschaft besteht. Strukturiert wird sie durch die Ereignisse, die sich im

27 Eine auf Deißmann zurückgehende Polarität, die ähnlich fatale Konsequenzen nach sich zieht, wie die unterstellte Polarität zwischen griechischer Form und christlichem Inhalt. Siehe A. Deißmann, *Licht vom Oste. Das neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt*, Tübingen [4]1923, insb. 194–196.

28 K. Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik*, München 1970, 3.

29 Es ist einer der wenigen Briefe, denen in der Forschung größere Aufmerksamkeit zuteil geworden ist. Spezialisierte Studien liegen vor von: F. Müller, „Der Zwanzigste Brief des Gregor von Nyssa", *Hermes* 74 (1939) 66–91. J. J. Rossiter, „Roman villas of the Greek East and the villa in Gregory of Nyssa Ep.20", *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 2 (1989) 101–110.

Verlauf seines Besuches ereignet haben. Als Briefschluss erwähnt Gregor ein Symposium, das ihm Anlässlich seines Besuches gewährt wurde, bei dem er sich beeindruckt zeigt von den dabei dargebotenen Speisen und Getränken (vgl. 20,20). Als er „nach der Sättigung in den Schlaf sank" diktiert er seinem Schreiber den vorliegenden Brief. (vgl. 20,21) Dieser Text überrascht, da es einen Bischof dokumentiert, der fernab asketischer Ideale, wie er sie in seiner Vita Macrinae entwirft, Luxus nicht nur zu genießen wusste, sondern darüber auch eloquent sprechen konnte. Und es zeigt, dass Gregor nicht nur in der griechischen Beredsamkeit ausgebildet worden war, sondern bereit war diese, unter Verzicht auf jede theologische Dimension, zu praktizieren. Und Gregor tut dies mit einer Selbstverständlichkeit, die es überhaupt nicht in Erwägung zieht, sich für den empfundenen Genuss, bzw. für Form und Inhalt seines Briefes zu rechtfertigen. Es scheint als stünde es für ihn außer Frage, dass ein christlicher Bischof in dieser Form agieren kann, darf und als Angehöriger der Bildungselite vielleicht sogar muss. Dieses Selbstbewusstsein ist bis zu einem gewissen Grade singulär. Noch und selbst Gregor von Nazianz verband seine faktische Anerkennung der kulturellen Standards mit einer latenten Polemik gegen just diese, um seine literarische Praxis vor sich und anderen zu rechtfertigen.[30] Gregor rechtfertigt sich für gar nichts.

Und sein Briefwechsel mit Stagirius—erhalten in den Briefen 26 und 27[31]—lässt erahnen, dass dies nicht das erste oder einzige Mal gewesen ist, dass Gregor in dieser Weise geschrieben hat. Der ursprüngliche Anlass der beiden Schreiben ist eigentlich banal: Stagirius bittet Gregor sich in seiner Eigenschaft als Bischof an die Presbyter von Osiana zu wenden und sie anzuweisen Bauholz aus kirchlichen Beständen freizugeben, mit dem Stagirius ein Privathaus errichten will. (vgl. 26,2) Die Bitte ist alles andere als bescheiden, da Gregor selbst bei Amphilochius mit der bitte um Entsendung von Bauleuten vorstellig werden musste, als er in Nyssa eine Kirche errichten wollte. (vgl. Brief 25) Ein Punkt auch in diesem Fall: der Mangel an geeignetem Bauholz.[32]

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30 Vgl. K. Demoen, „The Attitude towards Greek Poetry in the Verse of Gregory Nazianzen", in: J. den Boeft (ed.), *Early Christian poetry: A collection of Essays*, SVigChr 22, Leiden 1993, 235–252.

31 Wie bereits erwähnt, werden die Briefe teilweise auch in den Brief-Korpus des Basilius von Caesarea eingeordnet.

32 Brief 25,11. Eine ausführliche Diskussion dieser Passage bei: Ch. Klock, „Architektur im Dienste der Heiligenverehrung Gregor von Nyssa als Kirchenbauer (Ep.25)", in: A. Spira (ed.), *The Biographical Works of Gregory of Nyssa. Proceedings of the Fifth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Mainz, 6–10 September 1982)*, PatMS 12, Cambridge (MA) 1984, 161–180, bes. 171f., und R. Stupperich, „Eine Architekturbeschreibung Gregors von Nyssa. Zur Diskussion um die Rekonstruktion des Martyrions von Nyssa im 25. Brief", in:

Die Sorge von Stagirius, Gregor könnte seine Bitte abschlägig bescheiden,[33] scheint unter diesen Umständen durchaus gerechtfertigt.—Dies tut er jedoch nicht. Im Gegenteil, denn er kommt dem Sophisten nicht nur dahingehend entgegen, dass er seiner Bitte entspricht, sondern er gibt ihm auch zu verstehen, dass er seine Sprachkultur schätzt. Zwar kritisiert er die Sophisten als solche, weil sie „ihre Weisheit käuflich anbieten, so wie die Honigbäcker ihre Honigkuchen." (27,2)—ein klassischer Topoi, der Kritik des Sophismus, nicht nur von Seiten der Christen—aber er tut dies, indem er die von Stagirius verwendeten Wortspiele aufgreift und dadurch würdigt.[34] So ist seine Antwort voller Referenzen an klassische Autoritäten, namentlich an Plato, Homer und Herodot, während sich keinerlei Referenzen an biblische Schriften finden. Besonders beeindruckt jedoch, dass er die von Stagirius geprägten Sprachspiele in seinen eigenen Brief integriert (vgl. 27,4) und sie so rezipierend umdeutet. Der Briefwechsel zeigt, dass Gregor mit den epistolographischen Konventionen seiner Zeit vollkommen souverän umgehen konnte und sie unter Zurückstellung christlicher Gepflogenheiten praktizierte.[35] Er schrieb wirkliche ‚Freundschaftsbriefe',[36] in denen er bekennenden Heiden Gefälligkeiten gewährte, obwohl diese den Ortsgemeinden potentiell Nachteile bringen konnte.

In dieser Hinsicht geht sein Briefwechsel mit dem Sophisten Stagirius deutlich über den Befund seiner Korrespondenz mit Libanius hinaus (Briefe

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Studien zum Antiken Kleinasien. Friedrich Karl Dörner zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet, Asia Minor Studien 3, Bonn 1991, 111–125.

33 Vgl. 26,1: „Du aber flößt mir, je mehr Du die anderen an Rednergabe hinter Dir läßt, um so mehr Furcht ein, daß du hartnäckig meiner Bitte Widerstand leistest."

34 So in 27,1, wo Gregor den von Stagirius in 26,1 geprägten Neologismus δυσγρίπιστον aufgreift und spielerisch umdeutet.

35 Ein Beispiel in dem er die Annäherung an die griechische Kultur ausdrücklich vollzieht, findet sich in Brief 11,1.

36 Klock schließt aus dem genauen Kenntnisstand den Gregor gegenüber dem Baubedarf erkennen lässt, dass Stagirius sein neues Haus vielleicht in Nyssa erbauen ließ. Die an Stagirius gerichtete Einladung aus Gregors Brief Nr.9 wäre dann als Einladung an Stagirius zum Umzug nach Nyssa zu lesen. Klock führt aus: „Sollte diese Vermutung zutreffen, so dürften wir darin ein weiteres Zeichen für Gregors positive Haltung zur griechischen παιδεία sehen: ihn leitete der Wunsch, das Ansehen der Stadt durch Einführung eines geregelten Rhetorikunterrichts zu heben. Schließlich könnte unsere Hypothese dem verschiedentlich geäußerten Unbehagen begegnen […], ob Gregors Predigten in Nyssa überhaupt verstanden wurden." Ch. Klock, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Rhythmus*, 81; FN 95. Ob diese Hypothese, die sich sicherlich niemals verifiziert werden kann, zutrifft oder nicht, sei dahingestellt. Zutreffend ist jedoch die Beobachtung, der Wertschätzung, die Gregor Stagirius und in ihm der παιδεία allgemein entgegenbringt.

13 und 14). Natürlich bezeugen auch diese Texte, das Ansehen, das Gregor für nicht-christliche Kulturträger empfand und die Wertschätzung die ihm durch diese bezeugt wurde. Davon abgesehen, sind diese Schreiben, jedoch „nur" Freundschaftsbriefe im klassischen Sinn, deren Hauptanliegen im Brief selbst liegt, bzw. in der Pflege und öffentlichen Dokumentation der Beziehung zwischen den Schreibern. Anstatt an dieser Stelle auch diese Briefe zu analysieren scheint es deshalb viel versprechender den Blick darauf zu richten, in wie fern Gregors rhetorische Bildung, sein theologisch-philosophisches Denken beeinflusst hat, bzw. in wie fern seine Theologie, die er entwickelt, von den Möglichkeiten dessen abhängig ist, was er sprachlich denken kann.[37] Auch diese Frage soll im Spiegel der von Gregor überlieferten Briefe behandelt werden.

2.2 Gregor als theologische Autorität

Paradigmatisch lässt sich dies an seinem, an die Presbyter von Nikomedien gerichteten, 17. Brief nachvollziehen. Dort bestimmt er das Rollenmodell eines Bischofs dahingehend, dass Herkunft, Ansehen und Bildung allenfalls zweitrangige Eigenschaften darstellen, auf die gut verzichtet werden kann. Diese Eigenschaften möchte Gregor nur wie einen „Schatten, der zufällig folgt" gewürdigt wissen (vgl. 17,10). Er begründet seine Empfehlung mit Verweisen auf den Propheten Amos und die Apostel. Sie alle „waren keine Konsuln und Feldherren und Statthalter oder Leuchten in Rhetorik und Philosophie, sondern arme Leute und Laien, die aus recht niedrigen Lebensverhätlnissen kamen. Und dennoch ging ihre Stimme über die ganze Erde und ihre Worte an die Grenzen der Welt." (17,11)[38] Natürlich können die an dieser Stelle geäußerten Präferenzen aus dem konkreten Briefanlass erklärt werden: Gregor schreibt den Presbytern, weil ihr Bischof Patrikius gestorben ist und nun die Frage im Raum steht, wer sein Nachfolger werden soll. (vgl. 17,2) Wenn man den in Nikomedia zur Wahl stehenden Kandidaten als den von Sozomenos in seiner Kirchengeschichte[39] erwähnten Bischof Gerontius identifizieren möchte,[40]

37 Oder wie es Roland Barthes formuliert hat: „La langue, comme performance de tout langage, n'est ni réactionnaire ni progressiste; elle est tout simplement fasciste; car le fascisme, ce n'est pas d'empêcher de dire, c'est d'obliger à dire." R. Barthes, „Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France", in: R. Barthes, *Oeuvres complètes*, 5, Paris 2002.

38 Übersetzung: D. Teske, *Gregor von Nyssa: Briefe*, BGrL 43, Stuttgart 1997.

39 Vgl. Sozomenos, *Hist.Eccl.* VIII,6,2–8.

40 So Maraval, *Lettres*, 40; Teske, *Briefe*, 26; A. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 161f.

wofür sicherlich einiges spricht, lässt sich die Motivation für sein Einschreiten leicht aus seiner Gegnerschaft mit Helladius von Caesarea erklären, der diesen Kandidaten vorgeschlagen und schließlich—trotz der in diesem Brief deutlich werden Opposition Gregors—geweiht hat. Da Gregors konkrete Autorität in Nikomedia eher begrenzt gewesen zu sein scheint[41] ist es aufschlussreich nachzuvollziehen, wie er versucht Autorität für seine Argumente zu entwickeln. Er bedient sich dabei aller Kunstgriffe, die ihm seine rhetorische Bildung zur Verfügung stellt. Sein Hauptziel ist es in diesem Fall, die Affekte seiner Leser zu erregen und für sein Anliegen zu gewinnen.

Aufbau und Stil seines eigenen Schreibens sind dabei, entgegen dem bereits erwähnten Plädoyer für eine Christliche Torheit (in 17,10f.), alles andere als Töricht, sondern weltmännisch elegant. Wenn Gregor etwa den Presbytern bereits in der Salutatio des Präskripts (17,1) wünscht, dass ihnen „der Weg frei wird zu jeder guten Tat für die Einrichtung der Kirche" (17,1), so ist darin bereits eine äußerst feinsinnige Andeutung des Briefanlasses enthalten, da das Wirken und die Person des (künftigen) Bischofs für die Einrichtung der Ortskirche natürlich von hoher Relevanz ist. Noch kunstvoller ist der Übergang zum Postskript gestaltet, der gleitend und fast unmerklich geschieht, da er eingebunden bleibt in den bilderreichen Grundduktus des Briefes: Von der Frage ausgehend ob sie wenn sie Durst haben auf die architektonische Gestaltung des Brunnenhauses achten oder darauf, dass die Quelle im Inneren des Hauses reich sprudelt (17,27), versucht er seinen Hörern/Lesern zu vermitteln, dass es auf das Ansehen und die Bildung eines Bischofs nicht ankommt, sondern einzig und allein auf seine inneren Qualitäten als Seelsorger (17,28). Natürlich kann man dieses Bild auch als eine zusammenfassende Mahnung lesen. Und, die Stellung im Brief zeigt es: nicht anders ist das Bild hier gemeint. Diese Mahnung ist jedoch so dezent, dass sie darauf hoffen kann, von ihren Lesern/Höhrern kaum bemerkt zu werden und keine Abwehr-Reflexe zu wecken. Was bedeutet das alles für die Interpretation dieses Dokuments?—Die Kompositions-Methode die Gregor in diesem Text anwendet kann wohl dahingehend beschrieben werden, dass er durch eine Amplifikation von Sprachbildern versucht die Affekte seiner Adressaten in seinem Sinn zu erregen. Er greift dabei durchweg auf bekannte, im allgemeinen christologisch geprägte Bilder zurück, von denen er annehmen durfte, dass sie seinem Publikum durchweg vertraut waren.[42] Diese kontextualisiert er jedoch neu und fokussiert sie dabei statt auf Christus auf die Person

41 So geht aus 17,2 hervor, dass sein Schreiben an die Presbyter eigener Initiative entspringt und keineswegs eine Antwort auf eine zuvor eingegangene Bitte um Stellungnahme darstellt.

42 So das Bild von der Quelle und dem Strom, in 17,4–5 oder das Bild vom Schiff und dem Steuermann, in 17,19–20.

des Bischofs, wodurch er hoffen kann, dass sie neu gehört werden. Gleichzeitig versucht er die Überzeugungskraft des Schreibens durch Autoritätszitate zu erhöhen. Bibelzitate durchziehen das ganze Schreiben, wodurch die von Gregor verwendeten, bekannten christologischen Bilder nicht nur untereinander Wechselwirkungen eingehen, sondern eine zusätzliche intertextuelle Bedeutungsebene erhalten. Das gilt natürlich besonders für die Herleitung seines zentralen Gegensatzes Bildung/Ansehen—christliche Torheit, da in diesem Fall alle gewählten Beispiele biblischen Ursprungs sind, die zusätzlich durch Bibelzitate[43] legitimiert werden. Unter diesen Umständen fällt es schwer den Brief als Ausdruck von Gregors theologischen Überlegungen und Überzeugungen zu interpretieren oder als ein genuin theologisches Dokument zu deuten.[44] Der zentrale Gegensatz zwischen Bildung/Ansehen auf der einen und christlicher Torheit auf der anderen Seite baut natürlich auf dem bekannten Topos auf, der in der christlichen anti-paganen Polemik fest verwurzelt ist und auf den Gregor in diesem Kontext rekurrieren konnte ohne dass daraus notwendig auf seine persönliche Überzeugung geschlossen werden sollte. Dies geht auch aus 17, 14–15 hervor, wo Gregor Beispiele aus den Gründungsmythen des Römischen und des Mesopotamischen Reichs zitiert um seine Zuhöhrer zu überzeugen, dass es auf die Berufung des Leiters einer Gemeinde ankommt und nicht auf sein Ansehen in der Welt, bzw. seinen Besitz. Damit in Einklang steht sein Appell an den Bürgersinn der Presbyter (vgl. 17,17–18) sich als Einwohner Nikomediens der einstigen Größe und Bedeutung der Stadt bewusst zu sein und aus diesem Wissen heraus die jetzigen Geschicke ihrer Kirche zu ordnen, die dem Ansehen des (weltlichen) Gemeinwesens in nichts nachstehen soll. Ein solcher Aufruf richtet sich nicht an die christlichen Überzeugungen seiner Leser/Hörer, sondern an ihr Nationalgefühl als Bürger. Eine solche Aufforderung hätte auch in jeden paganen Brief der Zeit Eingang finden können. In den antiken Lehrbüchern der Rhetorik findet sich der Topoi des Lobs der Heimatstadt als Element, dass Redner in Enkomien auf die Honoratioren einer Stadt einflechten sollen.[45] Eine Trennung zwischen paganer Form und christlichem Inhalt scheint unter diesen Umständen weder möglich, noch sinnvoll. Stattdessen sollte versucht werden die Aussageabsicht Gregors aus dem Miteinander von Form und Inhalt zu rekonstruieren.

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43 Allein in 17,10–12 sind es 1, *Tim* 3,1–8; *Tit* 1,7–9; *Amos* 7,14; *Math.* 4,18; *Math.* 4,21; *Apog* 18,3; *Math.* 10,3; *Ps.* 18,5; *Röm.* 10,18; 1*Kor.* 1,26f.

44 Vgl. Maraval, *Lettres*, 39, gegen Teske, *Briefe*, 25 und Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 161f.

45 Vgl. etwa Pseudo-Dionysius von Halikarnassos, *Ars Rhetorica* V 2 oder auch Ulpian, *Digesten* I 16,7.

Diese Einschätzung gilt auch für das Zeugnis von Brief 1. In diesem, an Flavian, den Patriarchen von Antiochien gerichteten Brief, beschwert sich Gregor über das Benehmen des Helladius von Caesarea. Der konkrete Anlass für den Konflikt ist unbekannt. Die aus Brief 17 bekannte Streitfrage der Bischofswahl in Nikomedien könnte natürlich in die Auseinandersetzung hineingespielt haben, wirkliche Argumente für diese These gibt es jedoch keine. Andererseits kann auch über das Vorhandensein eventueller tiefergehender theologischer Differenzen nur spektuliert werden. So bleibt der einzige Anhaltspunkt, der aus Brief 1 entnommen werden kann, die Aussage Gregors, dass er sich von Helladius in seiner weltlichen Stellung missachtet und beleidigt fühlt.

Um sein Anliegen, das durch den ganzen Brief hindurch merkwürdig verschwommen bleibt, zu kommunizieren, orientiert sich Gregor am antiken Formular der Gerichtsrede: Strukturbildend ist naturgemäß deshalb auch in diesem Fall ein Gegensatz, der im Proöm (1,3) ausgedrückt wird: das mos maiorum der Vergangenheit in seinem Gegensatz zum Sittenverfall der gegenwärtigen Zeit, in der Frömmigkeit, Wahrheit und Frieden nicht einmal mehr als leeres Wort existieren (vgl. 1,3). Anders ausgedrückt: früher wäre eine Beleidigung, wie sie Gregor erfahren musste nicht einmal denkbar gewesen geschweige denn ausführbar. Worin genau der Konflikt zwischen Gregor und Helladius bestand, geht aus dem Schreiben aber, wie erwähnt, leider nicht hervor. Der Narratio sind diesbezüglich keine Informationen zu entnehmen. In ihr legt Gregor lediglich pathosreich dar, wie er bei seinem Versuch Helladius zu besuchen und zu einem klärenden Gespräch zu bewegen in seiner Ehre verletzt wurde. Dagegen fassen Refutatio und Confirmatio (1,28–33) zusammen, worum es Gregor eigentlich geht: Helladius hat seine Vorwürfe gegen Gregor niemals öffentlich gemacht und es gab bisher kein offizielles Verfahren, keinen „Prozeß“, keinen „Beweis“, kein „Gesetz“ das gegen Gregor „verlesen“, kein „Urteil“ das gefällt wurde. (1,28)—Nichts was das Verhalten des Helladius rechtfertigen würde. Deshalb erhebt nun Gregor selbst „Klage“,[46] weil er sich beleidigt fühlt; und zwar in seinem Rang als Kleriker (1,31), als Bürger. (1,32) und als wohlhabendes Mitglied der Oberschicht (1,33). Die Anschaulichkeit der Darstellung versucht er durch zahlreiche Details zu erhöhen. So beschreibt er nicht nur die Entfernung die er zurückgelegt hat, um zum Aufenthaltsort des Helladius zu gelangen, sondern auch, dass er die bergige Strecke teils zu Fuß zurück legen musste, nachts gewandert und so in der ersten

46 Die Zitation von Sach 7,9: „Fällt Ihr, die Ihr zu Gott blickt, ein gerechtes Urteil“ in 1,30, also zwischen Refutatio und Confirmatio, verstärkt dabei nochmals den Eindruck einer Gerichtsrede.

Morgenstunde an sein Ziel gelangt ist. (1,6–7) Erst um die Mittagszeit kommt es zu der gewünschten Begegnung. Bis dahin musste Gregor in „glühender Hitze“ (1,10) vor der Tür warten.[47] In die Darstellung eingeflochten ist seine Beurteilung des Geschehens: ein Vergleich mit der biblischen Botschaft zeigt, dass das Verhalten des Helladius unchristlich ist und nicht im Einklang mit der Botschaft des Evangeliums steht. (vgl. 1,16–20) Eine Beurteilung die durch seine teils ironische Sprache[48] noch verstärkt wird. In Präskript und Conclusio—an Stelle des Postskripts—wendet sich Gregor jeweils an Flavian und fordert ihn auf ihm zu helfen, damit die Auswirkungen eingegrenzt bleiben und nicht weitere Kreise ziehen. (vgl. 1,2) An Stelle eines Schluss-Segens steht ein Fluch, in dem Gregor seine Überzeugung ausdrückt, dass Gott dieses Unterfangen unterstützen wird. (1,35) Alles in Allem ist es also keineswegs nur die antike Form, der sich Gregor bedient um seine Klage vorzutragen, sondern es sind auch die antiken Umgangsformen selbst, um nicht zu sagen das mos maiorum, das Gregor verletzt sieht und deren Verletzung er zum Anlass nimmt um eine erbitterte Klage zu erheben. Form und Inhalt ergänzen sich deshalb und ein ‚christlicher Inhalt' im angenommenen Gegensatz zur ‚paganen Form' ist in diesem Brief an keiner Stelle zu erkennen.[49] Gleichzeitig bleiben die theologischen Grundlagen des Konflikts mit Helladius merkwürdig verschwommen. Wesentlich plastischer als diese treten die weltlichen Motive des Streits zu Tage: verletze Umgangsformen und Eitelkeiten, die mit vielen Worten und großem rhetorischem Aufwand geschildert werden. Auch in diesem Fall gilt also, dass Form und Inhalt einer bedingen. Die etwa vorhandenen theologischen Implikationen des Schreibens sind noch aus dem Wechselverhältnis von antiken (Umgangs-) Formen und christlicher Kultur zu rekonstruieren.

Ist in diesem Sinn das, was Gregor sagen kann und möchte, davon abhängig, was er gelernt hat wert zu schätzen und in ausgewählter Weise auszudrükken, so lässt sich diese Ambivalenz auch in seiner Arbeit an *Contra Eunomium* verfolgen. In Brief Nr. 29, in dem er, gegenüber seinem Bruder Petrus, die Arbeit an *Contra Eunomium* reflektiert, teilt er die Fertigstellung eines ‚ersten Buches' mit. Wenn er einleitend mitteilt, dass er gerade von einer Reise nach Armenien zurückgekehrt ist und noch kaum Zeit gefunden hat, seine Notizen über Eunomius „Buch der Häresie“ (29,2) zu ordnen, das ihm zudem nicht mehr direkt vorliegt (29,1–2), so kann man das—unbeschadet vom darin

47 Natürlich wird es eigentlich erst zur Mittagszeit richtig heiß—aber solche Nebensächlichkeiten müssen bei Gregor hinter der Darstellungsintention zurücktreten.

48 Vgl. Maraval, *Lettres*, 91 FN 2.

49 Aber auch die These, es handele sich bei Brief 1 um „one of the jewels of patristic personal writing“, Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 106, scheint mindestens gewagt.

enthaltenen Informationsgehalt—sehr gut als eine captatio benevolentiae deuten. Das selbe gilt für jene Passagen, in denen er sich rechtfertigt eine Verteidigungsschrift für Basilius geschrieben zu haben. Wenn er dies getan habe, dann vor allem aus Trauer über den Tod des Basilius und aus Wut über die von Eunomius vorgetragenen „Verleumndungen" (29,4) gegen die Person des Basilius. Er hofft, dass die Stellen seines Werkes, an denen er „gegen den Autor [Eunomius] einen gewissen Zorn und Brand des Herzens zum Ausdruck brachte" (29,4), deshalb auch von jenen Lesern akzeptiert werden können, die Gregor eigentlich anders kennen (vgl. 29,5), da „wir [Gregor] nicht um unserer selbst willen, sondern um dessen willen, was gegen unseren Vater [Basilius] gesagt wurde, zürnen" (29,6). Kurz: er räumt ein, dass seine Polemiken gegen Eunomius selbst und gegen dessen Theologie, vor allem auch aus stilistischen Gründen (zur Affekterzeugung) eingesetzt ist und dass sich der Stil in diesem Fall nicht am Ethos, sondern am Pathos orientiert. Nach Gregors eigener Einschätzung betrifft dies vor allem den ersten Teil des Werkes (vgl. 29,7).

Dass Gregor selbst von den stilistischen Qualitäten seines Werkes durchaus überzeugt ist, geht aus Brief 15 hervor. Auch darin nimmt er Bezug auf die „Gegenschrift gegen die Häresie" (15,2), eben Contra Eunomium, die er „vor längerer Zeit" ausgearbeitet hat und die er den Adressaten Johannes und Maximianus nun zukommen lässt. (15,3) Hauptanliegen des Schreibens ist seine Bitte, die Passagen aus seiner Schrift „die zur sprachlich durchgeformten Art gehören" dem Sophisten vorzutragen „wie vor einem Lehrer und Korrektor". (15,4) Als „der Sophist", von dem Gregor hier spricht, wird in der Regel Libanius identifiziert,[50] dessen Urteil—vor allem aber wohl dessen Lob und Anerkennung—Gregor erhofft. Dieses Schreiben wirft erneut die Frage auf, ob die Apologie des Eunomius als Verteidigungsrede—und für den mündlichen Vortrag—konzipiert worden ist, oder ob das Urteil das Basilius von Caesaraea in seinen *Contra Eunomium* formuliert hat zutrifft, nachdem die gewählte literarische Form lediglich ein rhetorisches Mittel sei um die Leser zu beeinflussen.[51] Das Zeugnis des Gregors zeigt nun, das zumindest seine Replik tatsächlich als Anklageschrift angelegt ist, die selbstverständlich—das Zeugnis von Brief 15 zeigt es—öffentlich vorgetragen werden sollte. Unter diesen Umständen scheint es unangemessen sein *Contra Eunomium* als eine rein dogmatisch-theologische Schrift zu interpretieren. Der Autorintention eher zu entsprechen scheint eine Lesart, die es zunächst als literarisches Werk und Zeugnis Spätantiker Kultur würdigt, in dem christliche Themen

50 Vgl. etwa: Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 158, Teske, *Briefe*, 13.

51 Vgl. dazu: J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa: Contra Eunomium I,1–146*, Patrologia 2, Frankfurt 1993, 40–56.

eine Rolle spielen. Ein Buch das bemüht ist, den rhetorisch-ästhetischen Konventionen der Zeit zu genügen und diese, didaktisch korrekt, in den Dienst der zu vermittelnden Sache stellt. Ein wie auch immer gearteter Gegensatz zwischen antik-paganer Form und christlichem Inhalt ist darin, so betrachtet, nicht enthalten. Vielmehr erhält die rhetorische Form einen Eigenwert, da erst sie die Vermittelbarkeit des Werkes in einer interessierten aber nicht-nur-christlichen Umwelt ermöglicht und garantiert. Damit soll weder einem literarischen Formfetischismus das Wort geredet werden, noch die These von einem Gegensatz zwischen Form und Inhalt aufgegriffen werden. Rhetorik erfüllt so wenig eine einfache Funktion, wie sie schlichtes Ornament ist. ‚Inhalt' hingegen ist so wenig außerhalb von Sprache denkbar, wie er auf eine mehr oder weniger gelungene rhetorische Form verzichten kann. Insbesondere bei rhetorisch gebildeten Autoren wie Gregor von Nyssa kommt es vielmehr darauf an beide Aspekte in ihrem Wechselspiel zu betrachten, bei dem sich Form und Inhalt gegenseitig erzeugen und verändern. Durch eine solche Lesart können dann neue Sinnebenen erschlossen werden, die erst die tatsächliche Bedeutungsfülle der kommunizierten Texte offenbar werden lassen.

3 Fazit

Der Durchgang des unter dem Namen Gregors überlieferten Brief-Korpus zeigt insgesamt die große Vertrautheit, die Gregor mit den (paganen) Kulturtechniken seiner Zeit verband. Die These, dass antike Kultur und biblisch-christliche Botschaft einen Gegensatz gebildet haben, lässt sich an Hand dieser Quelle nicht bestätigen. Eher scheint es, als habe Gregor, bei aller polemischen Skepsis, die er aus stilistischen Gründen gegenüber weltlicher Bildung formulieren konnte (vgl. Brief 17) die vorgegebenen Formen und kulturellen Konventionen aufgegriffen und um ihrer selbst willen gepflegt (vgl. insbesondere die Ekphrasis in Brief Nr. 20, aber auch die Briefe 26, 27). Wenn er hierfür gesellschaftliches Prestige gewann, so scheint ihn das nicht in Konflikt mit seinen christlichen Idealen gebracht, sondern seinem bischöflichen Amtsverständnis latent entsprochen zu haben (vgl. Brief 1).

Auch seine Arbeit an *Contra Eunomium* scheint in diesen Kontext eingeordnet werden zu können (vgl. Brief 29). Dieses Werk erscheint dann nicht als eine theologische Kampfschrift für ein primär innerkirchliches Publikum, das an der Diskussion zentraler Glaubensinhalte interessiert ist, sondern als ein Dokument, das innerhalb eines kulturell-politischen Diskurses verortet werden muss (vgl. Brief 15). Eines Diskurses, in dem theologische Fragestellungen natürlich eine Rolle gespielt haben, der aber darauf gerichtet war, den

adressierten Diskurspartner und Kontrahenten zu überzeugen, sondern sich an die interessierte, inner- und außerkirchliche, christliche und nicht-christliche Öffentlichkeit wendete. Die Mittel der Rhetorik garantierten in diesem Zusammenhang die Vermittelbarkeit des Werkes im Bereich der gebildeten Welt. Eine solche Einordnung mindert deshalb nicht den theologischen Gehalt des Werkes oder stellt die christliche Intention Gregors in Frage, sondern benennt und berücksichtigt lediglich das sozial-historische Umfeld, in dem die Theologie Gregors sich entwickeln und fruchtbar werden konnte. Dieses Umfeld stand—das Beispiel Kaiser Julians selbst zeigt es—der biblisch-christlichen Botschaft weder ablehnend noch indifferent gegenüber, sondern würdigte den Beitrag christlicher Kulturträger am gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Leben. Wenn nicht in Worten und Gesten, so doch doch durch eine faktische Rezeption ihrer Werke.

Are there Messalian Syneisakts in Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate* 23,4?

Liesbeth Van der Sypt

In this article I would like to draw attention to one of Gregory of Nyssa's ascetical and more practical writings, namely his *De virginitate*. In particular, I want to contribute to the discussion which arose in the margin of the broad debate about the precise relation between Gregory of Nyssa and the Messalians. This discussion mainly focuses on Gregory's use of the *Epistula Magna* of Pseudo-Macarius in his *De instituto Christiano*, a discussion I will lay aside here.[1] In the context of this debate a new, smaller discussion about Gregory's *De virginitate* 23,4 emerged. In this paragraph Gregory condemns ascetics

> who practice celibacy in name, but who do not refrain from social life, not only enjoying the pleasures of the stomach, but living openly with women, calling such a living together 'brotherhood,' and thinking that they are avoiding suspicion by this pious term. Because of them, this revered and pure way of life is blasphemed by the outsiders.[2]

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1 Some of the main works about this debate and the Messalians in general are: I. Hausherr, "L'erreur fondamentale et la logique du Messalianisme", *OCP* 1 (1935) 328–360; A. Guillaumont, "Les messaliens", *EtCarm* 31 (1952) 131–138; A. Kemmer, "Gregor von Nyssa und Ps.Makarius. Der Messalianismus im Lichte östlicher Herzensmystik", *StAns* 38 (1956) 268–282; J. Gribomont, "Le monachisme au IV^{e} s. en Asie Mineure. De Gangres au Messalianisme", *StPatr* 2 (1957) 400–415; J. Daniélou, "Grégoire de Nysse et le Messalianisme", *RSR* 48 (1960) 119–134; J. Gribomont, "Le De Instituto Christiano et le Messalianisme de Grégoire de Nysse", *StPatr* 5 (1962) 312–322; H. Dörries, "Die Messalianer im Zeugnis ihrer Bestreiter. Zum Problem des Enthusiasmus in der spätantiken Reichskirche", *Saeculum* 21 (1970) 213–227; R. Staats, "Messalianism and Antimessalianism in Gregory of Nyssa's De virginitate", *PBR* 2 (1983) 27–44; Id., *Makarios-Symeon. Epistola Magna. Eine messalianische Mönchsregel und ihre Umschrift in Gregors von Nyssa "De instituto christiano"*, AAWG PH III 134, Göttingen 1984; Id., "Basilius als lebende Mönchsregel in Gregors von Nyssa 'De Virginitate'", *VigChr* 39 (1985) 228–255; C. Stewart, *'Working the Earth of the Heart'. The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431*, OTM, Oxford 1991; K. Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus. Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte*, FKDG 71, Göttingen 1998.

2 Translation from V. W. Callahan, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Ascetical Works*, FaCh 58, Washington, DC 1967, 71. A critical edition of the Greek text can be found in M. Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité*, SC 119, Paris 1966, 538 and 540: . . ., καὶ πάλιν ἄλλους ἐκ διαμέτρου πρὸς τὸ ἐναντίον ἀποστατήσαντας, οἱ μέχρις ὀνόματος τὴν ἀγαμίαν ἐπιτηδεύσαντες οὐδὲν διαφέρουσι τοῦ

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In what follows I will situate this passage in the context of the ascetical practice generally known in modern scholarship as syneisaktism to help clarifying which ascetics Gregory had in mind here. Most scholars are convinced Gregory's *De virginitate* 23,4 is a reproach to the Messalians,[3] an originally ascetical movement which was condemned in the late fourth century for its radicalism and a little later also for its theological points of view. Not all scholars agree, however, that Gregory had (only) the Messalians in mind when he wrote this passage of the *De virginitate*.[4] By looking back to the origins of syneisaktism, we will see that the practice already existed a long time before in all layers of Christian society, which indicates that Gregory's criticism in *De virginitate* 23,4 was probably not directed to one specific group but more likely intended to criticize a more general and more widespread misuse in asceticism. But one could ask if in Cappadocia itself syneisaktism was practised by other people besides the Messalians. For this reason, I will also look to contemporary Cappadocian sources on syneisaktism. Primary attention will be given to Basil of Caesarea's *Epistula* 55, to Gregory of Nazianzus' *Epigrammata* and *Carmina moralia*, and to Pseudo-Basil's *De vera virginitatis integritate*, Gregory of Nyssa's assumed source of inspiration. Thereafter, I will also discuss Epiphanius, the only contemporary of Gregory of Nyssa who wrote an extensive account on Messalianism. Following an investigation of the history of syneisaktism and of writings of Gregory of Nyssa's contemporaries I hope to answer the question in the title: did Gregory have Messalian syneisakts in mind when he wrote *De virginitate* 23,4?

I A Short History of Syneisaktism

Before turning to the history of syneisaktism it is good to first explain what I understand by the word. Syneisaktism is a little investigated ascetical

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κοινοῦ βίου, οὐ μόνον τῇ γαστρὶ τὰ πρὸς ἡδονὴν χαριζόμενοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναιξὶ κατὰ τὸ φανερὸν συνοικοῦντες καὶ ἀδελφότητα τὴν τοιαύτην συμβίωσιν ὀνομάζοντες, ὡς δὴ πρὸς τὸ χεῖρον ὑπόνοιαν ὀνόματι σεμνοτέρῳ περικαλύπροντες· δι' ὧν καὶ σφόδρα τὸ σεμνὸν τοῦτο καὶ καθαρὸν ἐπιτήδευμα βλασφημεῖται παρὰ τῶν ἔξωθεν.

3 J. Stiglmayr, "Die Schrift des hl. Gregor von Nyssa 'Ueber die Jungfräulichkeit'", *ZAM* 2 (1927) 334–359; 358; J. Daniélou, "Grégoire de Nysse et le Messalianisme", 128; M. Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité*, 539–541; H. Dörries, "Die Messalianer im Zeugnis ihrer Bestreiter", 216–217; R. Staats, "Messalianism and Antimessalianism", 38–39; Id., *Makarios-Symeon. Epistola Magna*, 32; Id., "Basilius als lebende Mönchsregel", 232–233.

4 M. D. Hart, "Gregory of Nyssa's Ironic Praise of the Celibate Life", *HeyJ* 33 (1992) 1–19, 16, n. 11; K. Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus*, 100–102.

practice which is generally known in modern scholarship as 'spiritual marriage'. Writing about Gregory of Nyssa, however, I have chosen not to use this term because he himself uses the term ὅ πνευματικός γάμος[5] in his *De virginitate* to indicate the legitimate marriage between God and a virgin. Syneisaktism, on the contrary, signifies the unmarried living together of a virgin and a celibate man; an illegitimate practice in the eyes of Gregory and most other Church Fathers. Nevertheless, this form of asceticism was widespread in Late Antiquity. Although we do not possess any extensive texts of adherents of the practice, one may conclude from opponents' writings that the practice of syneisaktism originates from practical considerations as well as from theological convictions.

The origins of syneisaktism are unclear. Some scholars have suggested Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (*1 Cor* 7,36–38)[6] as our first literary source about the practice, but, in my opinion, without any convincing arguments. The same is true for scholars who proposed the ninth Similitude of the *Shepherd of Hermas* (10,6–11,8)[7] or Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* (1,6,3)[8] as our first source about syneisaktism.[9] Only in the beginning of the third century do we find a

5 Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate* 16,1; 20,1.3.4.

6 Cf. H. Achelis, *Virgines Subintroductae. Ein Beitrag zum VII Kapitel des I. Korintherbriefs*, Leipzig 1902; A. Jülicher, "Die geistlichen Ehen in der alten Kirche", *ARW* 7 (1904) 373–386; H. Achelis, "Agapetae", *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 1 (1926) 177–180; S. Belkin, "The Problem of Paul's Background", *JBL* 54 (1935) 41–60, 52; H. Lietzmann – W. G. Kümmel, *An die Korinther I-II*, HNT 9, Tübingen ^{4}1949, 36–37 (view of Lietzmann); L.-A. Richard, "Sur I Corinthiens (vii,36–38). Cas de conscience d'un père chrétien ou "mariage ascétique"? Un essai d'interprétation", *Mémorial J. Chaîne*, Lyon 1950, 309–320; R. H. A. Seboldt, "Spiritual Marriage in the Early Church. A Suggested Interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:36–38", *CTM* 30 (1959) 103–119, 176–189; J. C. Hurd, *The Origin of I Corinthians*, London 1965, 179–180; G. Peters, "Spiritual Marriage in Early Christianity. 1 Cor 7:25–38 in Modern Exegesis and the Earliest Church", *Trinity Journal* 23 (2002) 211–224.

7 Cf. A. Lelong, *Le pasteur d'Hermas. Texte grec, traduction française, introduction et index*, Les pères apostoliques 4, Paris 1912; H. Baltensweiler, *Die Ehe im Neuen Testament. Exegetische Untersuchungen über Ehe, Ehelosigkeit und Ehescheidung*, AThANT 52, Zürich 1967; E. A. Clark, "John Chrysostom and the *Subintroductae*", *ChH* 46 (1977) 171–185; B. Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives. John Chrysostom's Attack on Spiritual Marriage*, Berkeley (CA) – Los Angeles (CA) – London 2001, 80.

8 Cf. P. de Labriolle, "Le 'mariage spirituel' dans l'antiquité chrétienne", *RH* 137 (1921) 204–225, 210.

9 I have thoroughly analyzed these three texts in my doctoral dissertation *Late Antique Syneisaktism. A Diachronic and Contextual Study of a Christian Ascetic Practice* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, KU Leuven), Leuven 2013. For Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, see also my "The Unreliability of Irenaeus' Reference to Syneisaktism (*Adversus Haereses* I 6,3)", *VigChr* 66 (2012) 551–557.

clear reference to the practice of syneisaktism when Tertullian speaks about an "uxor spiritalis" in his presumed semi-Montanist work *De exhortatione castitatis*[10] and later in his Montanist work *De monogamia.*[11] Tertullian encourages celibate and widowed men to take in an "uxor spiritalis", an ecclesiastical widow, to help them do the housekeeping when necessary so they would not marry or remarry. Almost half a century later, Cyprian of Carthage resumes the thread of Tertullian in several of his letters. But while Tertullian was favouring the practice of having an "uxor spiritalis", Cyprian condemns the slightly changed practice; something all Church Fathers will do after him. Cyprian does not know syneisaktism as a celibate man or a widower living together with an ecclesiastical widow, but as a man taking in a (young) virgin. *Epistula* 4 was written by Cyprian and some of his colleagues in reply to a letter of bishop Pomponius. This bishop had asked how he had to deal with virgins living and sleeping with men, although they say they remain chaste. Even though this letter discusses a situation in Dionysiana and not in Carthage, Cyprian's *Epistulae* 13 and 14 prove that Cyprian also had to deal with the practice in his own diocese and even in the milieu of the confessors.

On the other side of the Roman Empire, we find the first recorded ecclesiastical condemnation of syneisaktism at the Synod of Antioch in 268/9.[12] Of this synod, no records of acts are left but some fragments of its Synodical Letter are extant through Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica.*[13] From these we learn that Paul of Samosata was dismissed from the episcopal see of Antioch not only because of his controversial Christology, but also because of his way of living on which Eusebius especially focuses. One of the complaints was that Paul had some συνείσακτοι γυναῖκες,[14] the first reference to this name one can find in

10 Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitatis* 12,1–2.

11 Tertullian, *De monogamia* 16,3.

12 P. Pape, *Die Synoden von Antiochien 264–269*, Wissenschafliche Beilage zum Jahresbericht der Siebenten Realschule zu Berlin, Berlin 1903, 12; C. J. Hefele – H. Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, I, Paris 1907, 198–199; H. Grotz, *Die Hauptkirchen des Ostens. Von den Anfängen bis zum Konzil von Nikaia (325)*, OCA 169, Rome 1964, 154; R. L. Sample, "The Christology of the Council of Antioch (268. C.E.) Reconsidered", *ChH* 48 (1979) 18–26, 18; H. C. Brennecke, "Zum Prozess gegen Paul von Samosata. Die Frage nach der Verurteilung des Homoousios", *ZNW* 75 (1984), 270–290, 272; J. A. Fischer, "Die antiochenischen Synoden gegen Paul von Samosata", *AHC* 18 (1986) 9–30, 14; J. A. Fischer – A. Lumpe, *Die Synoden von den Anfängen bis zum Vorabend des Nicaenums*, Paderborn 1997, 357; U. M. Lang, "The Christological Controversy at the Synod of Antioch in 268/9", *JThS* 51 (2000) 54–80, 54; J. Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, The Formation of Christian Theology 1, Crestwood, NY 2001, 209.

13 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 30,2–17.

14 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 30,12.

history. Apparently Paul had two—previously three—young women, pleasing to the eye, as companions with him wherever he went.[15] Though the Fathers assembled at the synod condemned the practice, they did not explicitly anathematize it.

We can prolong this overview with the Pseudo-Clementine *Epistulae ad virgines*,[16] the Pseudo-Cyprian writing *De singularitate clericorum*,[17] several treatises and letters of Athanasius,[18] the canons of the synods of Elvira (circa 305)[19] and Ancyra (314)[20] and of the Council of Nicea,[21] just to name a few of them, but already in Cyprian's letters and the Synodical of Antioch we find the same objections Gregory of Nyssa raises more than a century later against syneisaktism although with a different formulation. Just like Gregory, Cyprian, and the Fathers of the Synod of Antioch did not explicitly condemn the practice because what happened in it or could have happened, but because other people could be offended by the practice or enter into the practice without being strong enough to resist the passions cohabitation with the opposite sex stirs. On the basis of *1 Corinthians* 8,13[22] Cyprian urged his readers to abandon syneisaktism, because, although some are indeed strong enough to live with women while remaining chaste, many brothers will fall while trying to imitate their example;[23] a warning we also find in the Synodical of Antioch.[24] Moreover, all agreed that to be a virgin means more than having a specific physical constitution. Though remaining pristine in the body, by sharing the same bed, embracing each other, and conversing with the other sex one already shows dishonour and even crime, Cyprian attested, which makes such a virgin sinful and thus not a true virgin anymore.[25]

So syneisaktism was an old practice, at least dating back to the beginning of the third century. It has to be said that Gregory's reproaches against syneisaktism were not that original. But the earliest sources of syneisaktism did not

15 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 30,14.

16 Pseudo-Clement, *Epistula 1 ad virgines* 10,1; *Epistula 2 ad virgines* 1,2; 5,5–6; 8,2; 9, 2; 10,3–4; 15,4–5.

17 Pseudo-Cyprian, *De singularitate clericorum*.

18 Cf. *Epistula 2 ad virgines* 20–29; *Apologia de fuga* 26; *Historia arianorum ad monachos* 28.

19 Synod of Elvira, *canon* 27.

20 Synod of Ancyra, *canon* 19.

21 Council of Nicea, *canon* 3.

22 "if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall"

23 Cyprian, *Epistula* 4 2,3.

24 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII 30,13.

25 Cyprian, *Epistula* 4 3,1.

note that the adherents of the practice called the special relationship between the virgin and the man an ἀδελφότης ("brotherhood"). Was this maybe a particular Messalian name for the practice?

II The Context of Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate* 23,4

Almost all scholars nowadays agree that Gregory's *De virginitate* was written before his own episcopal consecration but after that of his brother Basil of Caesarea, which dates the treatise somewhere between 370 and 372.[26] The work is seen as Gregory's oldest one extant and it was presumably written following a suggestion of Basil. The section that interests us here is situated at the end of the *De virginitate*. After an encomium on virginity, emphasizing the severity of married life, and advising how one should live virginity, Gregory stresses at the end of his treatise the need of an experienced guide to lead a young ascetic in the right direction and prevent him from falling. One of these ambushes in which an ascetic could fall was syneisaktism. Literally nothing is said about Messalians in Gregory's text, not only in our passage but even in the whole work. Nevertheless, most scholars are convinced Gregory is speaking here about this particular group because of the resemblances with other texts which certainly deal with Messalianism—even though Epiphanius is the only contemporary of Gregory who tells us something more about the movement. So scholars frequently refer to writings of a—sometimes much—later period to demonstrate that the *De virginitate* refers to Messalianism.[27] In what follows I will on the contrary consult texts out of Gregory's own era to prove that there were also syneisakts in Gregory's immediate environment. I will do this by referring to several treatises of some of the individuals who inspired Gregory

26 See for example Stiglmayr, "Die Schrift des hl. Gregor", 336, n. 9; J. Daniélou, "Le mariage de Grégoire de Nysse et la chronologie de sa vie", *REAug* 2 (1956) 71–78, 72; Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité*, 31; Callahan, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Ascetical Works*, 3; D. L. Blank, "The Etymology of Salvation in Gregory of Nyssa's *De Virginitate*", *JThS* 37 (1986) 77–90, 77; M. R. Barnes, "'The Burden of Marriage' and Other Notes on Gregory of Nyssa's *On Virginity*", *StPatr* 37 (2001) 12–19, 12. Scholars who do not agree with this date include J. Gribomont, "Le Panégyrique de la virginité, œuvre de jeunesse de Grégoire de Nysse", *RAM* 43 (1967) 249–266, 250 (proposes to postpone the time of writing till 378) and Staats, "Messalianism and Antimessalianism", 41 (considers the period 375–378 as more likely; cf. also his *Makarios-Symeon. Epistola Magna*, 32 and "Basilius als lebende Mönchsregel", 229).

27 See note 3 above for references to modern scholars who hold this view.

the most, treatises of which scholars to my knowledge have never claimed that they are speaking about Messalianism.

1 *Basil of Caesarea*

One of the most important figures in Gregory's life was without any doubt his brother Basil of Caesarea. It is even suggested that Basil explicitly asked Gregory to write the *De virginitate*. Although Basil published many works on asceticism, only one deals plainly with syneisaktism. What is all the more remarkable is that Basil's *Epistula* 55, the text in question, probably dates from around the same period as Gregory's *De virginitate*.[28] In *Epistula* 55 Basil answers a certain seventy years old presbyter called Gregory who had written him to defend his way of living, including syneisaktism, even though his lifestyle had already received heavy criticism. Basil says he himself is not the only person who condemns the cohabitation of men and women by referring to the Council of Nicea which in its third canon forbade syneisaktism. By living together with a woman the presbyter dishonoured celibacy, although not in words but in deeds, and by this conduct he dishonoured himself. Basil did not understand why it was so hard for the presbyter Gregory to dissociate himself from the practice if there were no passions involved. While Basil believed Gregory when he said he had always remained chaste, he reminded him of *Rom* 14,13: "Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another". Though some would remain chaste while living together with a member of the opposite sex, others would lose their sacred virginity and by this their chance on salvation—something Cyprian had warned of more than a century earlier. Basil admonishes Gregory to separate himself from the virgin and to place her in a convent. If he would need any help in doing the housekeeping, he was allowed to ask some men to help him. Basil closed the letter threatening to anathematize Gregory and to expel him from the Church if he would keep the virgin.

Especially the last sentences make clear that Basil still considered the presbyter Gregory as a member of the Church. He even believed Gregory when he stated he had remained chaste while living with the woman and he was

28 R. J. Deferrari, *Saint Basil: The Letters*, LCL, I, London 1926, 347, n. 2; A. C. Way – R. J. Deferrari, *Saint Basil: Letters*, FaCh 13, Washington (DC) 1951, 144, n. 1; Y. Courtonne, *Saint Basile: Lettres*, CUF, I, Paris 1957, 140; B. Jackson, *Basil. Letters and Select Works*, NPNF II 8, Grand Rapids (MI) 1978 (= Buffalo, NY 1895), 158, n. 2203. Though W.-D. Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea: Briefe*, BGrL 32, I, Stuttgart 1990, 198, n. 270, cautions scholars that in the letter itself there are no indications to settle upon a date.

convinced Gregory's intentions were sincere. Also in his *Moralia*[29] and in his *Regulae*,[30] Basil emphasized that nobody should say or do anything that could cause scandal, something syneisaktism apparently did in his eyes.

In Basil we thus find a witness of the existence of syneisaktism in the Church of Cappadocia in the fourth century. However, like in the earliest sources, Basil does not use the term 'brotherhood' as his brother Gregory did in his *De virginitate*, to describe the cohabitation of the presbyter Gregory and his virgin.

2 *Gregory of Nazianzus*

Gregory of Nazianzus wrote a lot about syneisaktism in comparison to Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa. The practice is mentioned in at least ten *Epigrammata*[31] and in the first *Carmina moralia.*[32] These short epigrams and poems have been understudied so far so a lot of questions remain unanswered. When were these works written? To whom were they addressed? And for what purpose? Answers to these questions remain elusive. Yet, Gregory of Nazianzus was an acquaintance of Gregory of Nyssa and hence these texts deserve closer study than they have received before.

Frequently, Gregory of Nazianzus warns virgins not to live with men, even if these men are helpful and very wise, because there is a good chance they will lose their virginity. As Gregory puts it: it is not safe to keep a reed stem close to fire.[33] He reminds his audience that people are inclined to do evil and one should therefore avoid all temptations.[34] Besides, these virgins already have a lawful spouse, Christ. Taking in another man would therefore mean adultery and dishonouring Christ.[35] Even if the virgin and the man live chastely, they would still remain a stumbling block for their fellow Christians which is something one should avoid at all times.[36] Moreover, people will speak ill of the cohabitation, which will defile the virgin even when nothing bad has

29 Basil of Caesarea, *Moralia* 30.

30 Basil of Caesarea, *Regula fusius* 33; Basil of Caesarea, *Regula brevius* 64.

31 Hans Achelis only mentions *Epigrammata* 10–20 (Achelis, *Virgines Subintroductae*, 50,1 n. 2), while also *Epigrammata* 21–24 deal with syneisaktism as F. E. Zehles, *Kommentar zu den "Mahnungen an die Jungfrauen"* (*carmen 1,2,2*) *Gregors von Nazianz, V. 1–354* (unpublished doctoral dissertation Griechische Philologie, Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität), Münster 1987, 8, rightly observed.

32 Certainly Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,2; *Carmen* 1,2,3; *Carmen* 1,2,4; *Carmen* 1,2,5.

33 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epigrammata* 12.

34 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,2.

35 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,2; *Carmen* 1,2,3; *Epigrammata* 16; 18.

36 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,2.

happened.[37] Even worse, this form of cohabitation blemishes the reputation of all virgins including those who live a truly holy life.[38] Gregory asks these virgins whether shelter and a bit of bread are worth all this trouble.[39] A virgin should focus wholly on Christ, not on some earthly concerns. A woman should choose between a man and Christ because keeping them both is a sign of half-heartedness; mixing black and white produces gray, as Gregory says poetically.[40] The only solution Gregory sees is a clear separation of male and female ascetics.[41]

Like Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus counted these virgins as members of the Church. Similar to Basil as well, Gregory's greatest fear was the defilement of the virgins' reputation. Also he was convinced that while not all virgins lost their virginity while living together with men, they would never lose the imputation. Fear of slander from outsiders convinced Gregory to urge people to leave the practice. In conclusion, it should be noticed that Gregory of Nazianzus too never uses the term ἀδελφότης in his writings to refer to syneisaktism.

In short one can say that, just like his friend Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus is an unequivocal witness to the existence of syneisakts in the Church of Cappadocia in the fourth century. Moreover, we find in his writings about the issue the same arguments against syneisaktism that authors before him raised. In comparison to the ideas in Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate* 23,4 only the word ἀδελφότης is absent in Gregory of Nazianzus, as well as in all the other sources we have been reviewing so far.

3 *Pseudo-Basil*

In the middle of the fourth century[42] Pseudo-Basil[43] wrote the work *De vera virginitatis integritate*. Little is known about this treatise, but modern scholars

37 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,4; *Epigrammata* 11; 16; 21.

38 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epigrammata* 11; 21; 22.

39 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,4.

40 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epigrammata* 15. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,1; *Carmen* 1,2,2.

41 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1,2,5.

42 Different attempts have been made to give a more specific date. Thus, F. Cavellera, "Le 'De virginitate' de Basile d'Ancyre", *RHE* 6 (1905) 5–14, 11, and Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité*, 141, propose a date before 358. J. Reynard, "Médecine et théologie selon Basile d'Ancyre", in: V. Boudon-Millot – B. Pouderon (eds.), *Les Pères de l'Église face à la science médicale de leur temps*, ThH 117, Paris 2005, 105–120, 105, suggests a date somewhere between 352 and 360.

43 Since Ferdinand Cavallera's article of 1905 (Cavallera, "Le 'De virginitate' de Basile d'Ancyre"), scholars are ever more convinced that the work *De vera virginitatis integritate*,

seem to agree that *De vera virginitatis integritate* had an important influence on Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate*, also with regard to the passage on the syneisakts.[44]

In the short passage on syneisaktism in Pseudo-Basil's treatise, one only finds the same, traditional arguments once more. Also for Pseudo-Basil, it is absurd that women who aim for a virginal life want to live the life of married people; taking in all the concerns which go with it and thus becoming slaves of carnal concerns. He does not understand why virgins should need another protector in addition to their real Protector, their real Husband. As Cyprian did a century earlier, Pseudo-Basil quotes *1 Corinthians* 8,10–13 as a warning against causing scandals.[45] However, like the previous discussed authors, also Pseudo-Basil does not put these virgins outside the Church; neither does he

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previously attributed to Basil of Caesarea, was in fact written by Basil of Ancyra in the middle of the fourth century. See for example P.-T. Camelot, "Les traités 'De virginitate' au IV^e^ siècle", *EtCarm* 31 (1952) 273–292, 274; J. Leroy, "La tradition manuscrite du 'de virginitate' de Basile d'Ancyre", *OCP* 38 (1972) 195–208, 196; T. H. C. van Eijk, "Marriage and Virginity, Death and Immortality", in: J. Fontaine – Ch. Kannengiesser (eds.), *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, Paris 1972, 209–235, 224; C. Coudreau – P. Miquel, *Basile d'Ancyre. De la véritable intégrité dans la virginité*, Ligugé 1981, I–II; J. N. Steenson, *Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy. Faculty of Theology, University of Oxford*, Oxford 1983, 209; P. Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, LHR N. S. 13, New York (NY) 1988, 267; S. Elm, "'Schon auf Erden Engel'. Einige Bemerkungen zu den Anfängen asketischer Gemeinschaften in Kleinasien", *Historia* 45 (1996) 483–500, 494–495; Reynard, "Médecine et théologie", 105. A. Vaillant, *De virginitate de Saint Basile. Texte vieux-slave et traduction française*, Paris 1943, i–iii, on the other hand does not agree and sees the traditional view which says that Basil of Caesarea is the author, as genuine. In accordance with the work of A. Burgsmüller, *Die Askeseschrift des Pseudo-Basilius. Untersuchungen zum Brief "Über die wahre Reinheit in der Jungfräulichkeit"*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 28, Tübingen 2005, 16–45, I have chosen, however, to use the name Pseudo-Basil for Burgsmüller convincingly takes the edge off the arguments of Cavallera and his followers.

44 Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité*, 137–142; Leroy, "La tradition manuscrite du 'de virginitate'", 196; Coudreau – Miquel, *Basile d'Ancyre*, X–XII; Burgsmüller, *Die Askeseschrift des Pseudo-Basilius*, 219–234.

45 Peudo-Basil, *De vera virginitatis integritate* 43. According to Coudreau – Miquel, *Basile d'Ancyre*, XVIII, also chapters 57 and 64 deal with syneisaktism. However, by reading these passages one has to disagree with them. Chapter 57 only speaks about the three different kinds of eunuch (by nature, by education, and by free will). In chapter 64, Pseudo-Basil talks about chaste and unchaste relationships between eunuchs and virgins. Here one has to note that Pseudo-Basil only speaks of temporary encounters, not of durable relationships, an important feature of syneisaktism.

call this sort of relationship 'brotherhood'. Without questioning the influence of Pseudo-Basil's treatise on Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate* as such, it must be said that Pseudo-Basil had no particular influence on Gregory's passage on syneisaktism. One can hardly find more similarities between this particular fragment and the text of Gregory of Nyssa than between Gregory's treatise and the other discourses discussed above.

Besides this, it is important to note that Pseudo-Basil was not writing in opposition to the Messalians. So at first glance *De vera virginitatis integritate* introduces no new elements to our research on Gregory of Nyssa and the Messalians. But when examining more thoroughly Pseudo-Basil's addressee, Letoius, one encounters an interesting idea. Although the episcopal see of Letoius is not mentioned in the main text, the heading reads: "to Letoius, bishop of Melitene".[46] If this is true it means that the addressee of Pseudo-Basil was a bishop praised for his strong anti-Messalian enactments[47] and an acquaintance of Gregory of Nyssa![48] There is a good chance, however, that this part of the heading was added later since this Letoius of Melitene only became bishop around 381,[49] two decennia after *De vera virginitatis integritate* was written. One could ask if someone added "bishop of Melitene" after Letoius had become bishop, thus adding his new title to the ancient heading,[50] but no firm arguments sustain such a hypothesis. Pseudo-Basil was writing to a Letoius who remains otherwise unknown to us.

As the other texts discussed above, Pseudo-Basil's *De vera virginitatis integritate* tells us something about syneisaktism. The alleged "geistiger Vater"[51] of Gregory of Nyssa, however, employed other terms than his student. Furthermore, it is important to note that Gregory could not have learned anything from Pseudo-Basil about the Messalians since he was not writing about this movement.

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46 "ΠΡΟΣ ΛΗΤΟΙΟΝ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΝ ΜΕΛΙΤΗΝΕΣ".

47 Burgsmüller, *Die Askeseschrift des Pseudo-Basilius*, 52–61; Daniélou, "Grégoire de Nysse et le Messalianisme", 128.

48 Gregory of Nyssa addressed his *Epistula canonica* to this Letoius of Melitene.

49 Burgsmüller, *Die Askeseschrift des Pseudo-Basilius*, 45. F. Cavallera disagrees, however, saying that the heading is genuine, but another—unknown—Letoius of Melitene is meant than the one who became bishop in 381. See Cavellera, "Le 'De virginitate' de Basile d'Ancyre", 14; Steenson, *Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy*, 56, n. 51.

50 This hypothesis can be found in Vaillant, *De virginitate de Saint Basile*, i–ii.

51 Burgsmüller, *Die Askeseschrift des Pseudo-Basilius*, 260.

4 *Epiphanius of Salamis*

Epiphanius of Salamis wrote, in the final part of his *Panarion*, the first extensive treatise extant about the Messalians.[52] It is especially interesting for our research that Epiphanius started to write this work only a few years after Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate* appeared.[53] Yet, while reading Epiphanius' passage on the Messalians it is hard to find even the slightest reference to the practice of syneisaktism. It is true that, according to Epiphanius, Messalian men and women slept together—during summertime even in public[54]—but different from general practices of syneisaktism, these Messalians did not bind themselves to one partner and it is hard to speak of an endurable relation between two partners of different sexes. Moreover, Epiphanius says that only a few Messalians were chaste and abstained from women.[55] This would be unthinkable if he was talking of a widespread syneisaktism in the sect for in syneisaktism all are meant to be chaste. Epiphanius condemns the licentiousness of the Messalians, but it is unlikely he had syneisaktism in mind.[56]

This is confirmed by the fact that Epiphanius did know syneisaktism: in his account of at least three other sects he uses the word συνείσακτοι in the meaning of continent women who entered the houses of continent men while both claimed to remain chaste.[57]

It is interesting to note that in Epiphanius' passage on the Messalians, the term ἀδελφότης is never used. Styling it as a typical Messalian term for

52 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 80. Although Epiphanius uses the name Massalians there is no doubt he is referring to Messalians.

53 Daniélou, "Grégoire de Nysse et le Messalianisme", 119; Dörries, "Die Messalianer im Zeugnis ihrer Bestreiter", 216; Staats, "Basilius als lebende Mönchsregel", 232; Stewart, *'Working the Earth of the Heart'*, 18; Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus*, 21; F. Williams, *The* Panarion *of Epiphanius of Salamis. Book I* (*Sects 1–46*), NHMS 63, Leiden – Boston (MA) ^{2}2009, XX.

54 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 80, 3.

55 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 80, 8.

56 Contrary to the thinking of Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus*, 23; Staats, "Basilius als lebende Mönchsregel", 232–233.

57 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 63,2 (against a first type of Origenists); 67,8 (against Hieracites); 78,11 (against Antidicomarians). According to Achelis, *Virgines Subintroductae*, 20 and 69, n. 1, also *Panarion* 47, 3 (against Encratites) can be brought into connection with syneisaktism, but though Epiphanius speaks there of the licentious relationships between men and women, it is hard to see a form of syneisaktism in it. Gregory of Nyssa did not use the term syneisakts himself, though it is highly probable he knew the name that was already common since the middle of the third century and is used by his brother Basil of Caesarea (*Epistula* 55) and by his good acquaintance Gregory of Nazianzus (*Carmen* 1,2,2; *Epigrammata* 14; 15; 17).

syneisaktism is therefore hard to prove. Gregory of Nyssa's use of the term, therefore, seems to have nothing to do with Messalianism.

One must acknowledge, however, that if there are arguments against syneisaktism in this part of the *Panarion* they do not differ from the arguments against the practice we have found in other texts. One can find the same objections in the *Panarion*'s passage on Messalianism as Gregory of Nyssa makes against syneisaktism. Epiphanius says as well that the Messalian way of living is suspicious although he confesses he has no way of knowing any actual vice or sexual misconduct. However, for him the sleeping together of male and female Messalians is already a proof in itself.[58]

It is therefore understandable that one confuses the practices described in Epiphanius' refutation against Messalianism with syneisaktism. A closer look on the passage and its context, however, shows convincingly that Epiphanius does not speak of the practice within the Messalian movement.

III Conclusion: The Syneisakts in Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise

We may conclude that syneisaktism already existed long before Gregory of Nyssa wrote his treatise on virginity. It is attested in both the Western and Eastern part of the Roman Empire and in all layers of Christian society. Syneisaktism was thus by no means an 'invention' of Messalianism.

Writings of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus have shown that this ascetical practice occurred in Gregory of Nyssa's own era and environment. Furthermore, both authors do not say anything about syneisaktism within Messalianism. They saw adherents of the practice as ordinary members of the Church. As in the remainder of the Roman Empire, syneisaktism was practised in Cappadocia by other people besides the Messalians.

Gregory of Nyssa was, however, not only influenced by his close relations. While writing his *De virginitate* he may have found a great source of inspiration in Pseudo-Basil's *De vera virginitatis integritate*. But also Pseudo-Basil did not see syneisaktism as something typically Messalian. He just treats the practice as one of the improper forms of asceticism.

But, we had to look at Epiphanius of Salamis in order to be sure that Gregory of Nyssa was not speaking about Messalianism. This author tells us all about Messalian licentiousness, but nothing about syneisaktism. In Epiphanius' era as well as in Gregory of Nyssa's era it looks as if this ascetical practice was not a part of the Messalian way of life.

58 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 80,3.

Although the Fathers of the Church condemned syneisaktism many times, they did not see the adherents of the practice as outside the Church—at least as long as they did not ignore the warnings and eventually left the practice. Therefore Gregory of Nyssa was not the only one who thought the practice was too suspicious to be pious and his arguments are therefore not typically anti-Messalian. Though Gregory's term ἀδελφότης is peculiar in this context, this is not a reference to Messalianism; one can not find any clues that this term was specific for this movement in Gregory's era.[59]

To the question I asked in the beginning, namely if there are Messalian syneisakts mentioned in Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate* 23,4, one has to answer in the negative. Gregory reproaches in this passage only a general misuse in asceticism. It is not excluded, however, that Gregory also had Messalians in mind when he wrote his treatise on virginity, although Epiphanius of Salamis does not say syneisaktism was practised by the Messalians. One should therefore refrain from using Gregory of Nyssa's *De virginitate* 23,4 as an early source text for the study of Messalianism.

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59 One should note the remark of Pierre Maraval: "Le terme ἀδελφότης devient à cette époque, dans les milieux monastiques d'Asie Mineure, un des termes techniques qui désignent les communautés de moines: cf. Basile, *M. Asc. GR XXVII* (*PG* 31,988 A), XLIX (1037 C); Grégoire de Naz., *Epist.* CCXXXVIII, titre (*PG* 37,380 C); Macaire, *Epist. Magna* (ed. Jaeger, p. 234, 4; 256, 6, etc.); Ps.-Macaire, *Hom.* XXXI, 6 (ed. Dörries, 251, 90); *De Inst. Chr.* (*GN* 8/1,67,6). Même évolution du mot en latin: Jérôme, *Epist.* XCIX (*CSEL* 55, p. 213, 3), CXXXIV, 2 (*CSEL* 56,262,13) désigne par '*fraternitas*' la communauté des ascètes". (*Grégoire de Nysse. Vie de Sainte Macrine*, SC 178, Paris 1971, 194, n. 1).

Eunome, juif et païen à la fois, à la religion trompeuse

Françoise Vinel

Dans le *Contre Eunome* III (*CE* III), Grégoire de Nysse est loin d'en avoir fini avec la controverse proprement dogmatique qui l'oppose à Eunome. Cependant, la situation politico-religieuse a évolué depuis 380/381 et le concile de Constantinople ; si la rédaction du *CE* III peut se situer en 383, au débat dogmatique s'ajoute une urgence pastorale. Eunome et ses partisans continuent d'avoir du succès, ainsi que le rappelle l'historien Sozomène dans un des chapitres consacrés au règne de Théodose. Il ne précise pas les circonstances de l'exil d'Eunome, sans doute la conséquence du concile convoqué en 383, mais il insiste sur la notoriété dont jouit Eunome :

> .... L'empereur, lui, condamna Eunome à l'exil. Il vivait encore à Constantinople, tenait des assemblées de culte à part dans les faubourgs ou des maisons, donnait en conférences les ouvrages qu'il avait composés et en persuadait beaucoup d'avoir même opinion que lui, en sorte qu'en peu de temps les fidèles de la secte étaient devenus très nombreux[1].

Soucieux de la paix et de l'unité de l'Église alors que le premier concile de Constantinople n'a mis fin ni aux hérésies ni au schisme de l'Église d'Antioche, l'empereur Théodose a convoqué au printemps 383 une réunion des différents « partis »[2]. Dans son récit, Socrate de Constantinople met d'abord l'accent sur les troubles et sur la sagesse qu'il prête à Théodose :

> Il y avait des troubles dans les autres villes lorsque les arianisants étaient chassés de leurs lieux de prière. À ce propos, il me vient à l'esprit d'admirer la décision de l'empereur. Il ne permettait pas, en effet, autant qu'il était en son pouvoir, qu'on remplisse les villes de troubles, mais peu de temps après, il fit en sorte que soit convoqué de nouveau un concile de tous les partis, car il pensait que, suite à la discussion que les évêques

1 Sozomène, *Histoire ecclésiastique* VII 17, traduction de A.-J. Festugière – B. Grillet, SC 516,151.

2 P. Maraval note que Socrate utilise indifféremment les termes de « parti » (αἵρεσις) et « religion » (θρησκεία), pour désigner les différents groupes religieux (dans Socrate, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, SC 505, V 10 174,2).

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> auraient entre eux, une seule opinion, unanime, l'emporterait chez tous. (. . .) Peu de temps après cela, les évêques de chaque religion arrivèrent de partout, sous le même consulat, au mois de juin. L'empereur, ayant donc mandé l'évêque Nectaire, se demandait avec lui quel moyen adopter pour qu'il n'y ait pas de discorde dans le christianisme, mais que l'Église soit unie.

Suit un récit détaillé des difficultés liées aux exigences de chaque parti (Eunome lui-même et des Eunomiens sont présents, note l'historien), ce qui conduit Théodose à demander « que chaque religion fasse connaître par écrit la définition de foi qui était la sienne » (V, X, 22). Tout à l'éloge de l'empereur, Socrate le montre en prière, demandant l'aide de Dieu « pour choisir la vérité » lorsque lui sont remises les confessions de foi. La foi nicéenne est célébrée et si Socrate fait une exception pour les Novatiens, son jugement sur les autres groupes est sans appel : « Quant aux chefs des autres religions, à la suite des divergences qu'ils avaient entre eux, ils se discréditèrent auprès de leurs propres peuples ; réduits à l'impuissance et pleins de chagrin, ils se retiraient » (V, X, 29).

Qu'on lise le récit de Sozomène ou celui de Socrate, la « confusion » est grande et Eunome et ses partisans ne représentent qu'un des groupes. En cette même année 383, Grégoire de Nysse écrit d'ailleurs un bref traité « sur le Fils et l'Esprit »[3], qui fait aussi état du trouble qui s'est emparé des Églises, des simples fidèles. Après avoir rappelé la lecture du jour, le passage d'*Actes* 17 où, sur l'Aréopage, Paul « est aux prises avec stoïciens et épicuriens », il continue ainsi : « Pourquoi donc rappelai-je la lecture ? Parce que, aujourd'hui encore, il y a des gens à la mode de ces Athéniens, qui 'ne se réjouissent de rien d'autre que de dire ou d'entendre du neuf' (*Ac* 17, 21) ; alors qu'ils ont quitté hier ou avant-hier les tâches manuelles, théoriciens improvisés de doctrines théologiques . . ., ils vous font solennellement de la philosophie sur des points insaisissables . . . Tous les lieux de la ville sont remplis de gens de cette sorte, les ruelles, les places, les rues, les quartiers, les vendeurs de vêtements . . . Si tu demandes de la monnaie, il te fait de la philosophie sur engendré et inengendré . . . »[4].

Mais les divisions intra-ecclésiales ne sont pas les seules à semer le trouble. Et pour compléter un tableau qui nous aidera à mieux saisir comment la controverse doctrinale se double désormais d'une attaque contre Eunome sur

3 *Sur le Fils et l'Esprit et sur Abraham* (GNO X 2,117-144). Une traduction française de ce traité, précédée d'une introduction, a été publiée par M. Cassin dans la revue *Conférences* 29 (2009) 581-611.

4 GNO X/2 121 ; trad. de M. Cassin, 591.

le plan proprement religieux et cultuel, j'ajouterai les données mises en évidence par deux études. M. Harl[5], dans un article déjà ancien sur la condamnation des festivités profanes chez les écrivains chrétiens du IV^e^ siècle, montrait la convergence de plusieurs témoignages : les Cappadociens comme saint Jean Chrysostome insistent pour que les chrétiens ne cèdent à l'attrait ni des fêtes juives ni des fêtes païennes ; au-delà des développements rhétoriques décrivant les travers de ces fêtes, le mot d'ordre, pour ainsi dire, est net : « ni judaïser, ni helléniser »[6]. Eunome l'hérétique tombe évidemment dans les deux travers! Et lorsque J. Leemans analyse les panégyriques des trois Cappadociens et y repère la place encore prise par le culte de Mars à Césarée à la fin du 4^ème^ siècle, c'est pour souligner leur perception du flou des frontières entre christianisme et paganisme et conclure : « Christian bishops of the final decades of the fourth century knew very well that paganism was still very much alive and a viable alternative to which many christians were still being attracted. They knew that the borders between both religious systems were much more blurred than they chose to reflect in their discourse »[7].

La discussion sur le sens des affirmations d'Eunome, la recherche d'une juste définition de l' « inengendré », telles qu'elles se développent dans les traités *Contre Eunome* de Basile puis de Grégoire de Nysse débordent donc dans la vie des communautés chrétiennes. Aussi ai-je pensé pouvoir aborder quelques passages du *CE* III pour suggérer que, dans cette dernière partie, Grégoire manifeste des préoccupations peut-être plus pastorales, conviant son auditoire à réfléchir à ce qu'est le christianisme comme religion, comme culte. Le cœur de son argument pourrait s'énoncer ainsi : si la doctrine d'Eunome est si erronée, il ne peut s'agir que d'une religion trompeuse et ses fidèles doivent être détrompés. Une double question se forme alors comme en miroir : quelle est la religion d'Eunome ? Il ne saurait être chrétien . . . il est plutôt juif, mais aussi païen ; et l'autre versant de la question serait : qu'est-ce que le christianisme authentique, la religion de Grégoire de Nysse lui-même ? Un indice de cette préoccupation chez Grégoire nous est donné par la liste des composants du

5 M. Harl, « La dénonciation des festivités profanes dans le discours épiscopal et monastique, en Orient chrétien, à la fin du IVe siècle », in : *La fête, pratique et discours. D'Alexandrie hellénistique à la Mission de Besançon*, Paris 1981, 123-147 (Ead., *Le déchiffrement du sens. Études sur l'herméneutique chrétienne d'Origène à Grégoire de Nysse*, Études augustininnes – série Antiquité 135, Paris 1993, 433-453).

6 Cf. les références à plusieurs discours de Grégoire de Nazianze dans M. Harl, *art. cité*.

7 J. Leemans, « The Cult of Mars in Late Antique Caesarea according to the Panegyrics of the Cappadocians », *StPatr* 39 (2007) 71-77, phrase citée 76.

christianisme, si l'on peut dire, donnée au chapitre IX du *CE* III, et prolongée par sa réflexion dans les traités sans doute postérieurs que sont le *De professione christiana* et le *De perfectione christiana*[8].

Je ferai trois séries de remarques :

- l'assimilation d'Eunome aux Juifs et aux païens est suggérée, de manière polémique, évidemment, par une série d'allusions et citations bibliques, et plus précisément par la mention de personnages, une façon, pourrait-on dire, de constituer la généalogie d'Eunome.
- la préoccupation pastorale de Grégoire se traduit par le passage, dans le *CE* III, du discours dogmatique à une approche plus proprement religieuse.
- et, dès lors, Grégoire de Nysse souligne que de l'orthodoxie de la confession de foi dépend l'authenticité du christianisme, et donc son identité même.

I Eunome, juif idolâtre et païen athée

Ces accusations ne sont pas nouvelles et il suffirait de relire le début du *CE* I pour mesurer la virulence polémique de Grégoire de Nysse[9]. Plus largement, c'est chez les trois Cappadociens qu'on pourrait trouver cette double assimilation d'Eunome aux juifs et aux païens. Ch. Shepardson a ainsi étudié les liens entre polémique anti-juive et lutte contre Eunome : dans la rhétorique déployée à cet effet, la critique du judaïsme, particulièrement à travers la figure des adversaires de Jésus dans les récits évangéliques, paraît limitée, au contraire des accusations lancées contre Eunome, « pire que les Juifs »[10]. C'est

8 On y reviendra à la fin de l'article, mais sans entrer dans la complexe question de la datation de ces deux traités (GNO VIII 1 ; trad. française dans Grégoire de Nysse, *Écrits spirituels*, CPF 40, Paris 1990).

9 *Contre Eunome* I, traduction française de R. Winling, SC 521 et 524, Paris 2010. Mentionnons, pour l'exemple, l'accusation d'être influencé par le judaïsme lorsque Grégoire dénonce « ses pères en hérésie, je veux dire les scribes et les pharisiens » (*CE* I 107) ; ou parle de son « plaidoyer en faveur de la doctrine juive » (*CE* I 177), concluant son développement par une invitation pressante : « Qu'ils quittent donc l'Église pour retourner aux synagogues des juifs » (*CE* I 179). En écho, Eunome est, dans le *CE* III 9,36) le « défenseur de la compréhension judaïque », celui qui « importe dans l'Église les doctrines de la synagogue ». Du côté de l'influence grecque, Eunome est principalement présenté, dans le *CE* I, comme « technologue » et héritier des sophistes.

10 Ch. Shepardson, « Defining the Boundaries of Orthodoxy. Eunomius in the Anti-Jewish Polemic of his Cappadocian Opponents », *ChH* 76 (2007) 699-723, spécialement 714-721,

sur le recours aux personnages bibliques que porte notre lecture ; or précisément, dans son analyse du *CE*, B. Pottier note un changement d'approche, de méthode, du livre II au livre III et caractérise le livre III comme faisant davantage place aux sources bibliques, sur lesquelles il s'appuie pour définir plusieurs grands ensembles à l'intérieur du *CE* III[11]. Mais à côté des versets jouant un rôle central, et principalement *Actes* 2,36, on trouve toute une série d'allusions bibliques chargées de situer Eunome du côté des Juifs idolâtres et des païens perdus par leurs erreurs. La tonalité polémique reprend alors de la vigueur pour mettre en évidence le danger représenté par Eunome comme chef de communauté – et il serait intéressant de tenter de cerner dans les trois volumes du *CE*, au-delà d'une intention polémique globale, une évolution des objectifs polémiques de Grégoire de Nysse. Dans une lettre à son frère Pierre de Sébastée, Grégoire s'est expliqué sur la colère qui l'a emporté lors de la rédaction du premier livre contre Eunome : il réagissait contre l'animosité d'Eunome à l'égard de Basile, alors même que ce dernier venait de mourir : « ce n'est pas pour nous-mêmes, mais pour des propos qui ont été tenus contre notre père que nous nous sommes mis en colère. Dans de tels cas, c'est peut-être la modération qui est plus inexcusable que la colère »[12]. Dans sa réponse, Pierre déclare pleinement légitime l'attitude de Grégoire et l'encourage à continuer à lutter contre la doctrine d'Eunome :

> … Alors que la première partie du traité (d'Eunome) est détruite, si la fin est laissée sans examen, beaucoup pourraient croire qu'elle possède encore quelque force de vérité. Quant à l'humeur qui apparaît dans ton traité, elle procure aux sens de l'âme le plaisir du sel. De même que, selon Job, « du pain sans sel ne sera pas consommé » (Job 6,6), de même le traité serait sans intérêt ni force démonstrative s'il n'était pas relevé par les plus piquantes des paroles de Dieu[13].

Le point de vue de Pierre de Sébastée paraît limiter la portée de la polémique au plaisir qu'elle procure mais en même temps celle-ci relève de la nécessité,

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une partie de l'article que Ch. Shepardson conclut en ces termes : « Not accompanied by the same sharp anti-Jewish polemic of Ephrem and Athanasius, the Cappadocian arguments do not aim to prove their opponents *are* Jews, but use Judaism to criticize that they are *worse than Jews* » [italiques dans le texte].

11 B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Bruxelles 1994, 23-60 sur l'organisation du *CE*.

12 Grégoire de Nysse, *Lettre* 29,6 (SC 363, trad. P. Maraval, 313).

13 Lettre de Pierre de Sébastée à Grégoire de Nysse, *Ep* 30, 4–5 ; SC 363, trad. P. Maraval. C'est la seule lettre de Pierre qui nous soit conservée, et elle est intégrée à la correspondance de Grégoire de Nysse.

au service de la recherche de la vérité ; elle est évidemment de cet ordre pour Grégoire.

Parmi les allusions bibliques, on privilégiera ici celles renvoyant à des personnages.

Il s'agit d'abord, au chapitre 2, de Caïphe le Grand Prêtre, avec une allusion à Jn 11, 51 (*CE* III 2, 86) : « Étant grand prêtre cette année-là, il prophétisa que Jésus allait mourir pour la nation ». Comme Caïphe, suggère Grégoire, Eunome ne sait pas ce qu'il dit, lui qui est juif et soutient sans s'en rendre compte la foi de ses adversaires. Grégoire a commencé à argumenter dans ce sens en rapprochant deux phrases d'Eunome, selon lesquelles appartient respectivement au Père puis au Fils l' « essence (qui lui est) la plus propre et première »[14] (*CE* III 2,82-85) – Eunome se rend-il compte qu'il confesse ainsi la communauté de nature du Père et du Fils ? Et Grégoire de commenter :

> La vérité semble se manifester aussi par l'intermédiaire de ceux qui la combattent, car la mensonge n'a aucunement la capacité de l'emporter sur la vérité, pas même dans les paroles de ses ennemis. C'est pourquoi, par la bouche des adversaires, et sans qu'ils sachent ce qu'ils disent, la parole de la piété est proclamée, de la même façon que la passion salutaire du Seigneur pour nous a été annoncée d'avance par Caïphe – mais il ne savait pas ce qu'il disait[15].

Mais Eunome peut aussi être comparé à un personnage moins connu, Jéchonias (*CE* III 8,19–20)[16]. Grégoire évoque la « lamentation » et le deuil de Jérémie en écho au début du livre des *Lamentations*, mais le nom même de Jéchonias, fils

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14 L'expression οὐσία κυριωτάτη est difficile à traduire – R. Winling traduit « ousie la plus authentique », en *CE* I 151 ; B. Pottier traduit « essence suprême » pour ce même passage, qui est une citation d'Eunome, puis « essence la plus propre » (*Dieu et le Christ* . . ., Annexe 3, « Traduction de l'*Apologie* perdue d'Eunome », 463-498). Stuart Hall propose : « most authentic [essential being] » (*CE* III 2,84). Les passages du *CE* III traduits dans ces pages ont bénéficié de la traduction anglaise de St. Hall.

15 *CE* III 2,86 (GNO II 81,8-14).

16 Type de l'idolâtre, Jéchonias l'est aussi dans une des lettres de Basile à Amphiloque d'Iconium (Lettre 236) : les discussions sur la divinité du Fils sont le premier motif de la lettre et en se référant à Jérémie 22, 28-30, Basile suggère que Jéchonias a été chassé de la lignée davidique ; la comparaison avec Eunome reste cependant implicite. Grégoire le présente aussi comme l'exemple du pécheur corrompu au chapitre XVIII du traité *Sur la création de l'homme* : « La souillure du péché a effacé la beauté naturelle chez tel ou tel des hommes connus pour leurs vices, Jéchonias par exemple ». La mention de Jéchonias n'est donc pas isolée, le personnage, si l'on peut dire, fait partie des figures du mal, dans un contexte où la polémique n'est jamais loin.

du roi Ioakim, n'est mentionné qu'en *Jérémie* 24,1. Le nom constitue à lui seul l'allusion biblique, Eunome se trouvant aussitôt désigné comme l' « imitateur de Jéchonias ». Un peu plus loin dans le texte, Eunome est assimilé à divers hérétiques, Sabelliens et Montanistes, qui « judaïsent »[17], mais l'important, avec l'exemple de Jéchonias, est de le désigner comme un mauvais juif :

> Jérémie au zèle jaloux se lamenta sur le peuple des israélites lorsqu'avec Jéchonias, maître d'idolâtrie, ils se décidèrent pour le mal et que pour avoir outragé leur religion, ils furent condamnés à la captivité en Assyrie, chassés du lieu saint et éloignés de l'héritage de leurs pères.

Ainsi, Caïphe trahit la foi dont il devrait être le garant et Jéchonias entraine toute une partie du peuple dans l'idolâtrie, il commet donc la pire impiété pour un juif.

Du côté du paganisme, Eunome a aussi ses maîtres, et la référence à la scène entre Paul et les philosophes grecs est utilisée par Grégoire, comme dans le discours *Sur la divinité du Fils et de l'Esprit et sur Abraham*[18]. M. Cassin a souligné la proximité chronologique de ce discours, sans doute prononcé au début du concile de 383, et du *CE* III, mais la référence à *Actes* 17 y est traitée différemment, de manière plus argumentée dans le discours, plus allusive dans le *CE* III, où Grégoire se contente de suggérer une double analogie : de même que Basile est l' « imitateur de Paul », Eunome l'est des philosophes païens auxquels s'adresse l'Apôtre à Athènes :

> Vaines accusations! Basile est calomnié sous prétexte qu'il déshonore le Fils, lui qui Lui rend honneur comme il rend honneur au Père, et c'est Eunome qui combat pour l'honneur de l'Unique Engendré, lui qui le sépare de la nature bonne du Père! On fit un procès semblable à Paul chez les Athéniens lorsque, accusé par eux d'annoncer des divinités étrangères, il réfutait l'erreur de ces idolâtres excités concernant les divinités et il les conduisait vers la vérité en annonçant la résurrection en Jésus. Ces arguments, aujourd'hui encore, les nouveaux Stoïciens et Épicuriens les présentent à l'imitateur de Paul, eux qui 'ne se réjouissent de rien d'autre,

17 *CE* III 8,23 (GNO II 247,4).

18 Cf. infra, note 3. Outre la traduction, voir le commentaire de M. Cassin dans son article « De Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti et in Abraham », in : V. H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa, The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (*Tübingen, 17-20 September 2008*), SVigChr 106, Leiden, 2011, 277-311.

> comme le dit le récit au sujet des Athéniens, que de dire ou d'entendre du neuf' (*Ac* 17,21)[19].

Et au chapitre 6 encore, Eunome est associé aux Épicuriens : lorsqu'ils affirment qu'il y eut un temps où Il n'était pas, dit Grégoire, « que ces experts en sagesse s'aperçoivent qu'ils apparaissent comme les alliés des doctrines épicuriennes, qui se parent du christianisme alors qu'ils vénèrent l'athéisme » (*CE* III 6,53–54).

Mais l'identification d'Eunome et ses partisans aux épicuriens athées est plus développée dans le discours *Sur la divinité du Fils et de l'Esprit*, qui fait davantage place à *Actes* 17 : athée, Eunome l'est parce que nier la divinité du Fils, c'est rejeter le Père même ("qui me rejette rejette celui qui m'a envoyé »)[20] ; et Grégoire prend soin de marquer la logique de sa critique : « Donc il est démontré, par ce qui a été dit, que celui qui rejette le Fils rejette avec lui aussi le Père. Là où l'on ne glorifie pas le Fils et on ne croit pas que le Père est, la divinité est absolument rejetée. Et rejeter la divinité n'est le propre de personne d'autre que d'Épicure »[21]. Puis, la partie du discours qui rappelle à l'auditoire la promesse faite à Abraham (cf. *He* 6,13) et le récit de *Genèse* 22 permet à Grégoire de confirmer l'athéisme d'Eunome, mais en faisant appel à l'émotion plus qu'à la logique, comme le note M. Cassin : « comment mieux rappeler à l'auditoire, par les sentiments et non plus seulement par le raisonnement, combien est profonde l'horreur qu'il y a à séparer un fils de son père, le Fils du Père ? »[22].

Mauvais Juif, Eunome est donc aussi mauvais païen, puisque son modèle, Épicure, est de ceux dont les chrétiens ne peuvent que récuser la pensée.

Je m'en tiendrai à ces trois exemples fondés sur des allusions bibliques, qui mettent sur le même plan l'accusation d'helléniser et celle de judaïser. Eunome choisit dans les deux cas ce qu'il y a de pire mais, en magicien séducteur comme Circé et son breuvage, ou en orateur à la manière d'un mauvais Isocrate ou d'un Démosthène des campagnes[23], il est devenu un chef de file influent.

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19 *CE* III 2,163.

20 *Lc* 10, 16. M. Cassin, « *De Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti* », 291 rappelle que seul Basile recourt aussi à ce verset dans son *Contre Eunome*, I, 26.

21 Traduction de M. Cassin, 595.

22 M. Cassin, « *De Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti* » 300.

23 Comparaison avec Circé : *CE* III 2,78-79 ; avec Isocrate : *CE* III 5,23-24 ; avec Démosthène : *CE* III 10,50.

II De la discussion dogmatique au point de vue religieux

Le *Discours* 38 de Grégoire de Nazianze est une homélie pour la fête de l'Épiphanie, peut-être à situer en 380/381 à Constantinople[24]. Comment fêter dignement la venue de Dieu parmi les hommes, demande Grégoire, sans reproduire les rites festifs des païens ni rester dans l'indicible d'un Dieu inconnaissable ?

Lisons d'abord un court extrait du *Discours* 38 de Grégoire de Nazianze, parce qu'on y trouve exprimé le double danger représenté par Eunome, juif et grec à la fois, comme on vient de le voir. Ainsi est-il voué, nous dit Grégoire de Nazianze, à une « indigence de divinité », lui qui refuse la divinité du Fils et qui se donne aux idoles :

> . . . Lorsque je dis Dieu, j'entends le Père, le Fils et le Saint-Esprit ; la divinité ne se répand pas au-delà d'eux, pour que nous n'introduisions pas un peuple de dieux ; mais elle n'est pas limitée en deçà d'eux, pour que nous ne soyons pas condamnés à une indigence de divinité, parce que la monarchie ne nous assimile pas aux juifs, ni la surabondance aux Grecs[25].

Dans le *CE* III, la discussion dogmatique sur l'inengendré, sur le concept d'infini, sur l'interprétation du verset d'*Ac* 2,36, nourrissent la discussion mais Grégoire de Nysse en tire les conséquences pour l'Église. Et cela tient peut-être, si l'on est en 383, à ce que l'urgence grandit, comme l'attestent les deux extraits d'historiens ecclésiastiques cités en introduction.

Devant la gravité de la situation, Grégoire, en se plaçant sur le terrain de la division de l'Église, chercherait à faire reculer la confusion – *sugkhusis* – et la déportation à Babylone de Jéchonias est à l'image de l'exil d'Eunome. Quatre passages, extraits des sections 6, 8, 9 et 10, insistent sur ces conséquences ecclésiales de l'hérésie d'Eunome.

Au chapitre 8, après avoir mentionné Jéchonias, comme on l'a vu précédemment, Grégoire interprète allégoriquement l'allusion et montre que, comme l'idolâtrie de Jéchonias, l'erreur d'Eunome a des conséquences collectives :

> Il me semble plus approprié de chanter ces lamentations aujourd'hui, quand l'imitateur de Jéchonias entraîne ceux qu'il a trompés à cette nouvelle forme d'idolâtrie, en les bannissant de l'héritage de leurs pères,

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24 Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours* 38-41, éd. C. Moreschini, trad. P. Gallay, SC 358. C'est un des textes évoqués par M. Harl dans l'article mentionné plus haut (voir note 5).

25 Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours* 38,8 (SC 358,119).

> je veux dire de la foi. Et pour eux c'est sans préparation qu'a lieu le transfert vers Babylone, depuis la Jérusalem d'en haut, c'est-à-dire qu'ils sont transférés depuis l'Église de Dieu vers la confusion présente des doctrines mauvaises. Car Babylone s'interprète « confusion ». Et à la façon de Jéchonias dans son aveuglement, [Eunome] lui aussi après s'être volontairement privé de la lumière de la vérité, est devenu le butin du tyran de Babylone . . .[26]

Trois références johanniques rappelant que la vie éternelle est vie trinitaire (*Jn* 17,3 ; 3,15 et 4,14) concluent la phrase. Les partisans d'Eunome sont donc hors de l'Église, ils ont perdu « l'héritage de leurs pères, je veux dire la foi », explique Grégoire.

Deux autres passages tirés des chapitres 6 et 10 donnent aussi un éclairage au plan de la pratique religieuse, du christianisme comme religion. Au chapitre 6, Grégoire vient de faire tout un développement sur la mauvaise compréhension de l' « inengendré » par Eunome. Il conclut :

> Nous affirmons que tout cet appareil de sophismes pour dire que Celui qui est réellement un jour n'était pas, cela n'est rien d'autre que **transgression du christianisme et penchant pour l'idolâtrie** (*CE* III 6,9 – nous soulignons).

Et cette accusation de « transgression du christianisme » se retrouve dans le chapitre 9, dans un passage au style ample qu'il nous faut lire intégralement :

> Puisque donc il méprise les noms sacrés, par lesquels la puissance de l'engendrement très divin répartit la grâce à ceux qui y participent par la foi, et qu'il dédaigne **la communion aux symboles et des pratiques sacramentels, en quoi le christianisme a sa force**, disons en parodiant un peu la parole du prophète contre les auditeurs de la tromperie : « Jusques à quand ces cœurs lourds ? Pourquoi aimez-vous la perdition et le mensonge ? Comment ne voyez-vous pas que le persécuteur de la foi appelle ceux qui lui obéissent à une **transgression du christianisme** ? En effet, si la confession des noms vénérables et dignes de la sainte trinité est inutile et vaines les pratiques de l'Église – et dans ces pratiques il y a le sceau (de la foi), la prière, le baptême, l'aveu des péchés, le zèle pour les commandements, la droiture du comportement, la vie tempérante, l'attention à ce qui est juste – faite d'absence d'excitation du désir, de domination du

26 *CE* III 8,20 (GNO II 245-246).

> plaisir et de renoncement à la vertu – , si donc il dit qu'aucune de ces pratiques n'est bien faite et que les symboles sacramentels ne sont pas des protections pour les biens qui concernent l'âme, comme nous, nous le croyons, et qu'ils n'éloignent ceux qui assaillent les croyants à l'instigation du mauvais, que fait-il d'autre et n'est-ce pas manifestement ce qu'il fait, que proclamer aux hommes qu'il considère comme niaiserie le sacrement des chrétiens, **qu'il se moque de ce qu'ont de vénérable les noms divins, qu'il tient pour comédie les pratiques de l'Église**, pour bavardage et folie tout ce qu'opère le sacrement ? qu'apportent de plus les tenants de l'hellénisme pour calomnier notre doctrine ? ces gens-là ne trouvent-ils pas matière à moquerie dans **ce qu'ont de vénérable les noms dont notre foi tient sa puissance**, ne se raillent-ils pas des sacrements et des pratiques observées par ceux qui ont été initiés[27] ? [nous soulignons]

La vie de l'Église, les sacrements et finalement tout ce qui définit l'existence chrétienne, voilà ce qu'Eunome trouble. À défaut de commenter tout le passage, les expressions soulignées suggèrent que la seule réponse à Eunome, c'est une définition du christianisme, de ce qui fait sa force ou sa puissance : la confession des noms de la sainte Trinité ne saurait y être séparée de la vie sacramentelle. L'accusation de blasphème est régulièrement portée contre les hérétiques ; avec la liste des pratiques de l'Église mentionnée ici par Grégoire, cette accusation se fait concrète et le lien entre l'orthodoxie doctrinale et les exigences de toute vie chrétienne montre le danger représenté par Eunome. Une manière de rappeler également que les *noms*, Père, Fils et Esprit Saint, sont au cœur du débat doctrinal, tout le *Contre Eunome* le montre, eux qui sont aussi le sceau même de toute vie chrétienne.

Au chapitre 10, cette importance double des noms, doctrinale et pratique, apparaît encore plus nettement. Non sans exagération polémique, une fois de plus, Grégoire suggère que l'hérésie d'Eunome, puisqu'elle abandonne la doxologie chrétienne, cache une autre triade, empruntée aux divinités égyptiennes :

> . . . . j'en suis arrivé à considérer que c'est par admiration des mythes des Égyptiens concernant le divin qu'il mêle les croyances (de ces mythes) à leurs raisonnements sur le Monogène . . . . Cet habile théologien nous paraît donc prendre dans les mystères égyptiens pour ajouter Anubis, Isis ou Osiris au kérygme des chrétiens, mais sans confesser leurs noms. Mais il n'y a pas de différence, pour ce qui est de l'impiété, entre celui qui confesse les noms des idoles et celui qui garde en lui ces opinions et

27 *CE* III 9,57-59 (GNO II 285-286).

> se dispense de prononcer leurs noms. S'ils ne peuvent pas trouver dans la divine Écriture quelque affirmation de cette impiété, et si c'est des énigmes hiéroglyphiques que les discours de ces hommes **ont leur force**, ce que doivent en penser les hommes sensés est parfaitement clair[28] !

Dire sa foi, c'est confesser le nom du Dieu ou des dieux auxquels on croit. En ne prononçant pas le nom véritable de ses dieux, Eunome trompe les gens sensés, il semble vouloir cacher son idolâtrie et sème ainsi le doute. Remarquons que Grégoire reprend ici la même expression que dans le passage précédemment cité : qu'est-ce qui fait la force du christianisme, qu'est-ce qui fait celle de l'erreur ? N'est-ce pas une manière de mettre face à face l'identité religieuse d'Eunome et celle de Grégoire, celle de l'Église qu'il est conscient de défendre ?

Conclusion : Eunome, sans religion et menteur

À la confession de foi trinitaire Grégoire ajoute la vie sacramentelle et une liste de pratiques, comme on l'a lu précédemment (« dans ces pratiques il y a le sceau (de la foi), la prière, le baptême, l'aveu des péchés, le zèle pour les commandements, la droiture du comportement, la vie tempérante, l'attention à ce qui est juste ») – c'est tout cela qui définit l'être chrétien et Eunome le bafoue, le « trangresse ». De tels rappels à la fin du *CE* III ne sont-ils pas le signe de l'urgence pastorale que nous évoquions en commençant comme caractéristique de l'année 383 et du concile réuni par Théodose ? Du point de vue doctrinal, Eunome est hérétique, mauvais chrétien, donc, mais on peut tout aussi bien voir en lui un mauvais juif et un mauvais païen, comme on a essayé de le montrer. Autrement dit, il ne cesse de tromper ceux qui l'écoutent volontiers, et Grégoire se donne pour tâche de le démasquer.

Et bien qu'on se heurte toujours à la question de la datation relative des écrits du Cappadocien, je me permets pour finir de faire un rapprochement avec une œuvre considérée comme postérieure au *CE* III, une lettre d'exhortation à vivre en chrétien, le *De professione christiana*. Qu'est-ce qu'être chrétien, demande Grégoire, et il revient à l'étymologie du terme, le nom du Christ :

> Qu'est-ce que se dire chrétien ? Il est bien possible qu'en cherchant à répondre à cette question, nous ne perdions pas notre temps. Car si nous arrivions à trouver précisément la signification de ce nom, cela nous aiderait grandement à vivre d'une manière vertueuse en nous efforçant

28 *CE* III 10,41–42 (GNO II 305,21-306,1).

> par une conduite élevée d'être véritablement ce dont nous portons le nom. (…) Nous dirons que le christianisme, c'est l'imitation de la nature divine …[29]

La suite énumère des vertus et les exigences d'une authentique vie chrétienne. Mais préalablement, Grégoire de Nysse a raconté une anecdote, qu'il emprunte à Lucien – l'histoire d'un singe qu'on produisait dans un cirque à Alexandrie. Ce singe, donc, amusait les badauds, vêtu comme un homme, se comportant comme un homme, et il dansait en musique … jusqu'à ce qu'un spectateur lui lance, dit Grégoire avec la précision du conteur, « des amandes grillées » … Le singe jette alors le masque et révèle ce qu'il est vraiment.

Ce n'est pas dans les habitudes de Grégoire de raconter des fables … Et pourtant c'est l'histoire qu'il rapporte lorsqu'il s'interroge sur ce qu'est le christianisme véritable. Dans le *De professione christiana*, il vise, bien sûr, les chrétiens non sincères, mais Eunome qui cache le nom de ses vrais dieux et se pare de la confession chrétienne n'aurait-il pas quelque ressemblance avec ce singe ? En mentionnant la triade égyptienne comme celle que vénère sans l'avouer Eunome, Grégoire suggère que le christianisme lui sert de masque et qu'il est temps de sortir de cette confusion. Quant au traité sur la *Perfection chrétienne*, il se présente tout entier comme une explication des noms du Christ, pris comme modèles pour ceux qui « ont l'honneur d'être appelés chrétiens »[30].

Au fond, Eunome n'est ni juif, ni païen, ni chrétien, il est un menteur – ce qui est, certes, une définition de tout hérétique, rejeton du « père du mensonge », mais il y a aussi là une critique d'ordre moral, à l'intention des chrétiens qui se laisseraient tromper par l'habileté oratoire d'Eunome. Plus tard, au début de la *Réfutation de l'Apologie* d'Eunome, Grégoire ne fait allusion à Eunome que par périphrase, mais c'est pour souligner l'opposition radicale entre vérité et mensonge : « celui qui ose détourner la parole divine par des manigances sophistiques, celui-là a le diable pour père : il délaisse les paroles de la vérité et parle avec ses propres paroles, devenant père du mensonge. Car toute parole contraire à la vérité est absolument mensonge et non vérité »[31].

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29 Grégoire de Nysse, *La profession chrétienne* (GNO VIII 1 ; trad. J. Millet, Paris 1990).

30 *Traité de la perfection chrétienne*, trad. M. Devailly, Paris 1990, 33 (GNO VIII 1,176).

31 GNO II 313,20-24.

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Abbreviations

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AW	Athanasius Werke
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni opera
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
LG	*Lexicon Gregorianum*, ed. F. Mann, Leiden 1999–2014
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones, R. McKenzie *et alii, A Greek-English Lexicon, with a Revised Supplement*, Oxford 1996
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
PG	*Patrologia graeca*
SC	Sources chrétiennes
Vaggione	R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius, The Extant Works*, Oxford Early Christian Texts, Oxford 1987

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